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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“ Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S PRAYER TO THE DIVINE MOTHER

Mother, I throw myself on Thy mercy :
Keep me in constant thought of Thee !
I seek no sensuous pleasures, Mother,
No fame or supernatural powers ;
All that I ask is love for Thee,
Love unalloyed, unstained by desire,
That seeks no share of worldly things.

Grant, too, O Mother, that Thy child,
Enchanted by the world's bewitchments,
May not forget Thee. Grant that the spell
Of lust or gold may never lure me.

Mother, dost Thou not understand
That I have no one else but Thee ?
I know not how to chant Thy name ;
Devoid am I of all devotion,
Of wisdom, too, that leads to Thee,
Of genuine love. Bestow on me
That love, I beg, in Thy boundless mercy !

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I

To Miss Mary Hale

54 W, 33rd Street,
New York.

22 June 1895

Dear Sister,

The letters from India and the parcel of books reached me safe. . . .

I am going on pretty nearly in the same old fashion—talking when I can and silent when forced to be. . . .

How are you going on with your Christian Science lessons? I hope you will go to Greenacre. There you will find quite a number of them and also the Spiritualists, table-turnings, palmists, astrologers, etc., etc. You will get all the 'cures' and all the 'isms'. . . .

Landsberg¹ has gone away to live in some other place; so I am left alone. I am living mostly on nuts and fruits and milk, and find it very nice and healthy too. . . .

. . . The three great commentaries on the Vedanta philosophy belonging to the three great sects of dualists, qualified monists, and monists are being sent to me from India. Hope they will arrive safe. Then I will have an intellectual feast indeed. I intend to write a book this summer on the Vedanta philosophy. This world will always be a mixture of good and evil, of happiness and misery. This wheel will ever go up and come down. Dissolution and resolution are the inevitable law. Blessed are those who struggle to go beyond. . . .

I read somewhere in a funny book that an American vessel was about to founder in the sea. The men were desperate and, as a last solace, wanted some religious service being done. There was 'Uncle Josh' on board,

¹ Herr Leon Landsberg, who later became a monastic disciple of the Swami, with the name 'Swami Kripananda'.

who was an elder in the P— Church. They all began to entreat, 'Do something religious, Uncle Josh! We are all going to die.' Uncle Joseph took his hat in his hand and took up a collection on the spot!

That is all of religion he knew. And that is more or less characteristic of the majority of—. Collections are about all the religion they know or will ever know. Lord bless them. Goodbye for the present. . . .

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda

II

To the same

C/o Miss Dutcher,²
Thousand Island Park, N.Y.
26 June 1895

Dear Sister,

Many thanks for the Indian mail. It brought a good deal of good news. You are enjoying by this time the articles by Prof. Max Müller on the 'Immortality of the Soul' which I sent to Mother Church.³ The old man has taken in Vedanta,—bones and all—and has boldly come out. . . .

I am asked again and again, as you will find in the letters from India, to come over. They are getting desperate. Now if I go to Europe, I will go as the guest of Mr. Francis Leggett⁴ of New York. He will travel all over Germany, England, France, and Switzerland for six weeks. From thence I will go to India or I may return to America. I have a seed planted here and wish it to grow. This winter's work in New York was

² A disciple of the Swami and his hostess at Thousand Island Park, U.S.A.

³ The name by which the Swami humorously used to style Mrs. G.W. Hale.

⁴ A disciple of the Swami, who helped him in various ways.

splendid and it may die if I suddenly go over to India. So I am not sure about going to India soon.

Nothing noticeable has happened during this visit to the Thousand Islands. The scenery is very beautiful, and I have some of my friends here with me to talk God and soul to *ad libitum* ... and so forth and studying huge Sanskrit books on Vedanta which they have kindly sent me from India. ...

You fussed so much over my reply to Madras, but it has produced a tremendous effect there. A late speech by the President of the Madras Christian College, Mr. Miller, embodies a large amount of my ideas and declares that the West is in need of Hindu ideas of God and man and calls upon the young men to go and preach to the West. This has created quite a furore, of course, amongst the Missions. ...

I hope Father Pope⁵ will go to Europe and Mother Church too. Travelling is the best thing in life. I am afraid I will die if made to stick to one place for a long time. Nothing like a nomadic life!

⁵ The name by which the Swami humorously used to style Mr. G.W. Hale.

The more the shades around deepen, the more the ends approach—the more one understands the true meaning of life, that it is a dream. And we begin to understand the failure of everyone to grasp it. For they only attempted to get meaning out of the meaningless. To get Reality out of a dream is boyish enthusiasm. 'Everything is evanescent, everything is changeful'—knowing this the sage gives up both pleasure and pain, and becomes a witness of the universe, this panorama, without attaching himself to anything.

'They indeed have conquered Heaven even in this life whose mind has become fixed in *sameness*. God is pure and same to all; therefore they are said to be in God.' (*Gita*).⁶ Desire, ignorance, and inequality—this is the trinity of bondage.

Denial of the will to live, knowledge, and same-sightedness is the trinity of liberation. 'Freedom is the goal of the universe. Nor love nor hate nor pleasure nor pain nor death nor life nor religion nor irreligion—not this, not this, not this.'

Yours ever,
Swami Vivekananda

⁶ V. 19.

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

PATNA : APRIL-MAY 1936

Swami Vijnanananda had come to Patna on a short visit and was putting up at the residence of a devotee. One day, in the course of conversation, the Swami said: 'The Master (Sri Ramakrishna) came to demonstrate in his own life the harmony of all religions. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) used to say, "Among my rules of discipline for the Math, there will be one rule that within the precincts of the Math none shall speak ill of any religion or its followers".'

The talk turned to other topics. The host said to the Swami, 'This (Ramakrishna) temple (at Belur Math) is certainly going to be a grand structure'. In reply, as it were, the Swami said, 'It was Swamiji's great desire' (that this temple should be erected). And the main responsibility for (the completion of) the temple lay on my shoulders. However, (I am glad) I shall be able to see that his desire has borne fruit.'

Speaking of Sri Ramakrishna, the Swami

said: 'One day when I had gone to Dakshineswar to meet the Master, it became very late in the evening before I could prepare to leave for my home in Calcutta. The Master asked me to stay on for the night, and I did accordingly. He himself brought food from the Nahabat and fed me with great affection. He fixed up my mosquito-curtain with his own hands. Soon after I went to bed, finishing my night meal, the Master came up to me and said tenderly, "Look here, do you know why I love you all so much? Because you are my own. And because the Divine Mother has asked me to love you." After he had talked many things, I fell asleep. I did not come to know when he had dropped my mosquito-curtain down into position. Before dawn he woke me up and asked me to practise Japa. And he began to recite the Lord's names, clapping his hands at the same time. Later in the morning when I took leave of him, he gently said, "Do come again". You see, we have been mad after seeing him (Sri Ramakrishna); but you have been mad merely hearing of him.' As the Swami spoke these words with great emotion, his face became flushed and eyes were filled with tears. He exclaimed with warmth of feeling, 'How intensely the Master used to love us! That was why Baburam Maharaj¹ had remonstrated with his mother saying, "Can you love me even as the Master does?"'

The Swami continued: 'One day I was seated near the Master. A well dressed gentleman arrived. Seeing him the Master said, 'Hallo, how is it you are here? The other day perhaps somebody held you back, pulling you by the sleeve!' Hearing this, the gentleman became speechless with wonder. Then he asked the Master, "How could you come to know of it?" The Master said, "At the very sight of people I

¹ Swami Premananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

can clearly understand the inner workings of their minds".'

Then a disciple requested the Swami to give spiritual initiation to some earnest students eager for it. The Swami asked, 'Do you speak the truth always?' On the disciple answering, 'I try to do so as far as it lies in my power', the Swami said, 'If one does not learn to be strictly truthful, it will not be possible for any one to achieve success in spiritual life'.

The day of the Swami's departure from Patna arrived. As it was a rainy day, the host humbly and repeatedly suggested to the Swami, 'Maharaj, today it is bad weather; I shall not allow you to leave.' The Swami said (with emphasis in his tone), 'How can that be so? I have said I would go, and so I must go. When the Master used to say he would go somewhere, he would keep his word at all costs. One must stick rigidly to truth.'

Addressing a disciple, the Swami asked, 'Have you seen spirits?' On the disciple replying in the negative, the Swami said, 'Why, in your own body are the Pancha-Bhutas (five elements)! But fear not. Repeat the name of Rama, then they will go away. Where Rama-nāma is chanted, there the spirits cannot remain.'

As the time for departure drew near, a young child of the host came up to the Swami. After cutting some jokes with the little boy, the Swami said in general, 'If one's thoughts and words are (at variance and) not harmonized with each other, it is not possible to attain Him (God). There are three types of human beings who are able to suit their words to their thoughts, viz. an innocent young child, a lunatic, and a Brahma-jnāni. We have seen the Master frank and guileless like a child. He would play with children, in dishabille, just like one of them, without feeling any shame to do so. This is what is wanted.'

BANARAS : FEBRUARY 1938

Swami Vijnanananda had come to Banaras on a visit. One day, in the course of conversation, the Swami asked one of the inmates of the local Ashrama, 'Well, do you love the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) or do you love me?' The reply was, 'We love both'. At this the Swami expressed satisfaction and said, 'Then it is all right. The Master is indeed Rama and Krishna. And the Holy Mother is no other than Sita and Yogamaya. This time the Master's advent on earth was in a disguised form. The king moves among his people sometimes in his royal robes and sometimes in disguise to get an intimate view of their sorrows and suffering. Next time also the Master will incarnate himself with his divine identity concealed. However, it is certain that the Master will be coming again soon. He was a very simple and straightforward person. But when absorbed in Samadhi or high

spiritual moods, he would become a different person altogether. At such times none could dare approach him.'

Next day, in the evening, referring to the newly constructed Ramakrishna Temple at Belur Math, the Swami said: 'The temple has been constructed according to the plan given by Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda), only with slight variations here and there. How very tremendous is the will-power of the Master! And especially that of Swamiji! Or else we could hardly imagine that such a huge plan would materialize within such a short time. Even Swamiji, after drawing the plan, was astonished at its immensity. It is through the great power of Swamiji's influence that his noble desire has been fulfilled by his devotees and admirers. Swamiji's personality was uniquely remarkable. All would reverently surrender in his magnetic and compelling presence.'

THE ARTLESS ART OF RIGHT LIVING

BY THE EDITOR

*Uddharedātmanātmānam nātmānamavasādayet,
Ātmaiva hyātmano bandhurātmaiva ripurātmanah.
Bandhurātmātmanastasya yenātmaivātmanā jītah,
Anātmanastu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat.*

'A man should uplift himself by his own self; so let him not weaken this self. For this self is the friend of oneself, and this self is the enemy of oneself. The self is the friend of oneself for him who has conquered himself by this self. But to him who has not conquered himself, this self is inimical, (and behaves) like (an external) foe, (*Bhagavad Gita*, VI. 5-6).

To the vast majority of modern men, life presents a long series of perplexities and contradictions, a medley of inexplicable evils and tantalizing pleasures. Some, who are popularly termed 'pessimists', look upon the world as a 'vale of tears', where the sum total of its evils far outweighs the benefits it

has conferred upon mankind. They view the worst aspect of things in life and declare that this 'mad world' is not at all a fit place for honest and devout persons to live in, for their souls are 'sick with every day's report of wrong and outrage with which the earth is filled'. There are others,

generally called 'optimists', to whom this seeming-solid earth, this 'Lord's footstool', is the best of all possible worlds, where one should live with a robust will to achieve as much success, power, and happiness as one can. Their philosophy of life, in a nutshell, seems to be: 'I am rich and well-born. Who is equal to me? This today has been gained by me; this is mine, and that also shall be mine in future. That enemy has been slain by me, and others also shall I slay. I am the lord, I enjoy and shall rejoice ever more in time to come.'

Standing half-way between 'optimism' and 'pessimism' is what is sometimes called 'humanism or meliorism'—the creed of rectilinear progress, occasional set-backs notwithstanding. With a view to effecting a compromise between out-and-out 'optimism' which seeks to ignore the stern realities of life and distressing 'pessimism' which chills all enthusiasm for worldly enjoyments, this 'secularized religion' of comparatively recent origin holds that life, at any rate, is something certain and definite and admits the importance of human values to the perfection of humanity. While they do not attempt to explain away the problem of evil, they however believe that misery will go on declining and happiness increasing *ad infinitum* so that finally only what is good and pleasant will prevail to the exclusion of all evil. This apparently positive ideal of the humanist has offered comfortable shelter to many who wish to be dubbed neither as 'optimists' nor as 'pessimists'.

Life is doubtless a great art, infinitely more creative and soulful than the most sensitive and superb fine arts we know of. The art of right living is something quite unlike the artful 'go-ahead' spirit with which modern men so readily wish to immerse themselves in multifarious activities. This supreme 'artless art' as it may be termed, involves a ceaseless and diligent effort on the part of the individual to live in complete harmony with the 'realities' around him,

and, at the same time, master the valuable raw material of experience and transform it into a synthetic expression of the Self in order to regain and continue to maintain the integrity and wholeness of his personality. The ultimate end of all religion, philosophy, education, and science—in fact, of all purposive human activity,—is the cultivation of this art of life, this concrete and vital method of self-development, which alone can lead man to the state of everlasting peace and blessedness here and hereafter. The deepest yearnings of the human heart can find their fulfilment only in a good, true, and beautiful life lived amidst an environment of happiness and contentment. The art of being successful in life is obviously not that which consists ultimately in dissimulation or dissipation but that which rouses man to an awareness of the universal spiritual consciousness. The deepest springs of the soul reveal themselves only to those who have fully understood the quintessence of life on earth and who have found the key to the jig-saw puzzle of existence.

Whether one is an optimist or a pessimist or even a cynic at that, there is no gainsaying the fact that life is real and earnest and not a collocation of fortuitous circumstances. Everybody knows and accepts that life is not an empty dream, not an illusory thing like a castle in the air. Man is not born to live and die like dumb, driven cattle. Everyone comes into the world to fight, as on a battlefield, to struggle for higher and better things than merely commonplace creature comforts. It is human life alone, in contrast with all other forms or species of life—whether gods, angels, sub-human beings, or animals,—that offers the best and surest way to perfection, to ultimate freedom. Man is the greatest being, greater than all others, in the universe, for it is open to him to struggle for the higher development of the soul and directly attain to salvation, nay, to become God by knowing God even in this very life. Hence it is in this world

of work and in this life of worship that the greatest and best chance lies for every individual to fight his way out of this Samsāra, as well as he can, and to make a path for himself through the ocean of diversities and dualities in order to reach the goal of life. Here arises the supreme necessity of an art of life, of the Yoga of evenness of mind (*samatvam*) and dexterity of work (*karmasu kauśalam*), representing the highest ideal of human perfection.

Some vague and more or less purposeful philosophy of life everyone has, though most people more often than not find themselves unable to define it in the context of their approach to life's problems. The conflicts and demands of modern life that urgently press for solution are so numerous that man, unprepared and undisciplined as he is, cannot but feel unequal to the task. But in his vain attempt to achieve success and give a good account of himself before God and fellowmen, he loses sight of the primary need for the cultivation of discrimination (*viveka*) between what is essential (*nitya*) to life and what is not (*anitya*). In his mad rush for forestalling others and grabbing at happiness which the world is known to offer in various ways, man lets his infirm and selfish nature get the better of him. Thereby he is apt to regard the end as justifying the means, even wrong means which are likely to distort and sometimes destroy the end in view. The common run of men who seldom pause to think seriously of the plan and purpose of life are content to drift aimlessly down the current of pleasure and pain in a humdrum way. Not that the obvious doubts and difficulties about the fundamental matters of God, soul, and the universe do not assail them. But they are reluctant to face these questions, thinking that satisfactory answers to them are beyond their capacity.

How often does man forget that the pleasure and pain, or success and failure that he meets with alternately in life are but the

obverse and reverse of one and the same medal of relative existence! His desire to be happy or successful is quite as legitimate as his liability to unhappiness and suffering. For, the world is a mixture of good and evil, of happiness and misery; and any attempt to increase the former must of necessity increase the latter too. Rather, experience has shown that if pleasure increases in arithmetical progression, correspondingly pain increases in geometrical progression. Wherever there is the power of producing happiness, there lurks also the power of producing its opposite. Innumerable attempts have been made to remedy this state of things by fruitlessly trying to circumvent causes of friction and discomfort and create conditions where there will be only good and no evil. The assumption that pleasure and pain are two distinctly disparate things and that the world can be bettered by increasing pleasure on the one hand and removing pain on the other is as absurd as it is self-contradictory. For, with greater sensibility to pleasure and the development of higher powers of enjoyment, man's powers of suffering and susceptibility to pain also develop *pari passu*. It seems conflicts and frustrations are inevitable so long as pleasure remains the primary objective of life. A hedonistic philosophy of life will ultimately rob a man of what he most desires, viz. peace and happiness everlasting.

Nor is any sort of 'escapism', by blinking hard facts of life around and leaving things to take their own course, going to help find a way out of all this misfortune and suffering. To beat a hasty retreat from the battlefield of life and deny, ostrichlike, in sheer self-delusion, such a palpable phenomenon as misery and suffering in the world is certainly no basis for building up the right attitude to life. The world is full of evils and life is never free from suffering, no doubt. But the remedy proposed, i.e. to give up and withdraw from the world, seems so impracticable and unrealistic. For,

if a man is to give up everything in the world and remain completely inactive and unconcerned, it is as good as terminating his very existence on earth, which is not at all a feasible proposition. Thus it is seen that neither a facile optimism nor a defeatist malism nor a barren humanism is quite adequate to take man safely and successfully along the path of life's journey. None of these attitudes seems capable of offering a basis for a philosophy of plain living and high thinking, for all of them lack the spiritual background which alone can subdue the malignant forces that threaten to make life fragmentary and futile.

Human life is no smooth sailing. Man has a variety of interests and purposes which demand fulfilment. His aesthetic nature and emotional life have to be satisfied, his physical and intellectual powers given full scope for expression, and his moral and spiritual urges fulfilled. The modern man has large access to the storehouse of Nature and wants to utilize all its forces for the gratification of his aspirations and hopes, desires and ambitions—in short, for assuring a comfortable living for himself in the first place, and next for those near and dear to him. He directs all his thoughts, words, and deeds, in order to achieve the primary objective of his life, whatever it may be, mainly on the sense plane. Men are sometimes divided into different classes and types according to the ideas and ideals predominantly displayed in their life, such as theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, or religious. Every civilization, every society, and following them every individual has a goal, an ideal in life for the attainment of which all values, functions, and interests are trained and applied. The modern scientific or materialistic outlook of life has actuated man to take up the pursuit of sense pleasures as the supreme goal of life. The dominant characteristic of this sensate philosophy of life is to lay emphasis on the material values and physical needs of life to the exclusion

of its more permanent spiritual content. Consequently the uncontrolled mind and the unrestrained senses remain the arena of conflicting urges and disturbances of head and heart, resulting in untold suffering and painful tragedies in individual and collective life.

The ancient poser whether to 'eat to live' or 'live to eat, drink, and be merry', has, like the writing on the wall, always confronted nations and individuals. In this, history points to a great lesson. Where hedonistic ideals prevailed and a materialistic interpretation of life and society predominated, there spiritual and moral decadence has rapidly set in, making the tragedy of life more terrible than ever before. On the contrary, where religious and spiritual values were the primary objective of life and society, while secular ideals and material advancement were not at all discouraged but subordinated to that primary objective, there the most advanced and enduring civilization has taken root and flourished, silently giving out the rich fragrance of its sovereign peace and love for the benefit of the whole of humanity. The seers and sages of India understood, followed, and taught the artless art of right living long ago. They proclaimed that the peace and happiness man desires in life and which he is so hectically seeking in the world, cannot be had outside, but can come only from within himself. They held that in order to get rid of evil and suffering permanently, man has to give up, rather renounce, what he now considers to be good and pleasant. They did not denounce the world like the pessimists of today, nor did they cling to its enjoyments like the modern easy-going optimists. They warned the people that a false optimism or a sham altruism or even an easeful idealism was nothing but cowardice in disguise, seeking to blind our eyes to the deeper and more fundamental problems of life.

The Hindu philosophers declared that the conception of individuality arises from the

identification of the Self or Spirit with the non-Self or the external elements, with all their limitations and qualifying adjuncts. But in reality the Atman is eternally free from ignorance, misery, birth, or death—in fact, from all Upādhis that the physical, the subtle, and the causal bodies are subject to. It was therefore laid down, on the indisputable authority of the scriptures and the tested realizations of the saints, that the supreme objective of human life is to realize the true nature of all existence including man, to become directly and intuitively aware of the one ultimate Reality (*paramārtha*), and to manifest this godhead or divinity in man in and through life itself.

The scheme of life prescribed by the Vedic seers, with this ultimate spiritual goal in view, requires that the individual should not give up his activities and duties (*svadharma*) in the world but must continue to perform them with that enlightened consciousness born out of true discrimination (*viveka*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*). The renunciation called for is not of the ostentatious type to which man is often driven under despair and disappointment. The teachers of the world have taught that life on earth, short and swift as it is, should be so diligently and perspicaciously lived as to derive the maximum lasting benefit for one's own salvation and for the good of the world. He knows the art of life who knows how to live untrammelled by the diverse forces of the world like a free man, in spite of the encircling pleasures, sufferings, friends, and foes, and who, by the exemplary life he lives, not only affirms the richness and perfection of Self-realization but also proves that it is intensely practical.

Thus it finally comes to this that if we want to make life worth while and be free from its sorrow and suffering, we cannot but give up our hankering for its fleeting pleasures and sense enjoyments. The ideal of true renunciation in practice means giving up the world and its

objects as we think of, see, and experience them through ignorance, and instead deifying them by covering everything with the realization that it is all nothing but Self or God. The Vedanta offers the only rational and practical solution to the baffling problem of apparently conflicting forces that tend to make life so unmanageably complex, by asking man not to submit himself to the slavery of the senses in any form but to control them and finally transcend them. It is neither optimism, nor pessimism, nor secular humanism. The mind which makes man feel happy as well as unhappy in proportion to his attachment to the senses and the body has to be trained by steady practice and equipped as a sharp and effective instrument for taking in the protean experiences of life without being affected or ruffled by them. Disciplines helpful towards this end are many and varied, such as Shama, Dama, Uparati, Titikshā, Shraddhā, and Samādhāna, and are indispensable to right living. The art of life is to 'be *in* the world but not of the world', to remain 'non-attached', in the centre of intense activity, like a lotus-leaf in water, and to know the secret of working with a purpose but without any longing to the fruits thereof.

Let no one think that such a state of spiritual equanimity as the ideal of human life is visionary and impracticable simply for the reason that the majority of people in the world are found not to have attained it. Nor is it true to say that it is too difficult or impossible for the majority to strive for. The Vedic seers who had realized the Supreme Reality face to face never intended to give dry suicidal advice or create a utopian world. They were not 'dreamers' who disregarded this world or the present life and thought only of the 'other world' or a future life. They had anticipated that man, a pleasure-loving being as he is, is likely to be dragged down the primrose path to the level of beasts if he is not given a higher and better objective in life. What can be higher than Self-

or God-realization (*ātma-darsana* or *mokṣa*), the highest value in life (*puruṣārtha*) every individual is required to achieve! Too much ease and comfort are as deleterious to the all-round development of man as too little of it. A healthy and harmonious synthesis of the ideal of prosperity (*ābhyudaya*) and the ideal of Supreme Good (*nirśreyasa*) is the *sine qua non* of right living.

It is ridiculous to suggest, as some do, that such a philosophy of life makes people indolent, fatalistic, or indifferent to material welfare. It is just the contrary. Life is held as a sacred trust to be utilized for the achievement of the supreme goal—to realize God existing in every man, in every being, to do work in the spirit of worship, and to serve man looking upon him as God in human form. According to this philosophy of life there is no inherent contradiction between true spirituality and unselfish secular activity.

Great stress is laid on self-effort (*puruṣakāra*) in every field of work. To depend on destiny and helplessly dree one's weird is the characteristic of only those who are lacking in an abiding faith in themselves and in the divine power of the Atman. And one has to be constantly vigilant on this pilgrimage to the Unknown, lest he should slip from the ideal and come to grief, for the path is said to be 'sharp as a razor's edge'. And it is 'hard to tread and difficult to cross', especially for those who are not free from wickedness and whose mind is unsubdued and restless.

So says Sri Ramakrishna: 'As a boy holding to a post or pillar whirls about it with headlong speed without fear of falling, so perform thy worldly duties, fixing thy hold firmly upon God, and thou shalt be free from danger ... so be in the world but always remember Him.'

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA *

BY MRS. VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT

VIVEKANANDA AND THE INDIAN RENAISSANCE

One of the makers of modern India, Vivekananda represented the finest flowering of the Indian renaissance movement which started with Ram Mohan Roy in early nineteenth century. The principal objectives of this movement were the spiritual and social regeneration of India. Centuries of political subjection had degraded Indian society. Religion had degenerated into dogmas and the practice of rituals. Social life had become stagnant. For a time it appeared as if India had lost her soul. The leaders of Indian renaissance harked back to the rich ancient heritage of their culture. They drew their inspiration from the Vedanta

(the Vedas and Upanishads). An old tradition was reborn, a new vigour imparted to the almost forgotten spiritual forces that had shaped India's destiny through the ages.

The aim of Vedanta is to reveal the underlying harmony of all religions and philosophies, all arts and sciences, as different approaches to the same Reality. Its message is impersonal, scientific, and non-sectarian. It proclaims that man, divine in his essential nature, is the master of himself and his destiny. This emphasis on the basic harmony of Indian culture and the underlying unity of the apparently diverse currents and forms of Indian social life spring from the fundamental teachings of Vedanta.

This humanistic tradition of Indian culture was once again emphasized by

* See *To Our Readers*.

Vivekananda. To him there was no Hindu or Muslim, Brahmin or untouchable, rich or poor. In every human being he saw the divine and the service of God was identical in his eyes with service of man.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MAHATMA GANDHI

Vivekananda is perhaps the most powerful single influence which prepared the ground for the movement led by Mahatma Gandhi for the liberation of India. There are many parallels between the teachings of Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi, and some of them are almost identical even in their form of expression. The oneness of all religions leading to God, the supreme value of service to humanity rendered without selfish interest or hope of reward but only as service to God, fearless opposition to all forms of slavery and human bondage, love for everyone including one's own enemy, are only a few of the basic beliefs held in common by both the Swami and the Mahatma. Vivekananda's call for fearless and unselfish service consummated as it were in Mahatmaji's practice of Satyagraha. Both were worshippers of the *Daridra-Narayana*; they believed in serving God through serving their fellowmen; both fought religious bigotry and superstition, and both were intensely interested in awakening their countrymen to a sense of self-respect and a faith in their purposeful destiny.

I may perhaps mention in this connection that an American author, Vincent Shean, in his recent biography of Mahatma Gandhi entitled *Lead, Kindly Light*, has dealt with this subject in a convincing manner. Now, I do not want you to run away with the idea that Vivekananda's was the only influence which moulded Mahatmaji's spiritual and social ideas, much less his technique of political action, for Vivekananda did never directly participate in politics, but there is no doubt that the social content of Gandhiji's political ideas owed much, directly or indirectly, to the teachings and practical

example of Swamiji. Under Mahatmaji's leadership the field of action became infinitely wider and absorbed numerous other forces aspiring after national liberation, but Gandhiji never failed to stress the importance of purity and love, in much the same way as Vivekananda did, amongst his disciples who were dedicated to the redemption of their fellow creatures, not merely in the narrow political field, but in all other spheres of life, material as well as spiritual.

VIVEKANANDA—THE INTERNATIONALIST

Vivekananda had a modern mind. Early enough in his life he realized that the national decadence of India was primarily due to her cultural isolation from the rest of the progressive world. He exhorted the youth of India to go out into the wide world and see for themselves how other peoples lived and take lessons from this experience for the regeneration of their motherland. He deprecated the Indian habit of his days of running down Western materialism and at the same time condemned all superstitions and social tyranny perpetrated in the name of religion. Some of his famous utterances come to mind :

'First bread, then religion.'

'No man, no nation, can hate others and live.'

'We talk foolishly against material civilization. The grapes are sour. I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven.'

'We cannot do without the world outside India; it was our foolishness that we thought we could; we have paid the penalty; let us do it no more.'

It was with this idea of breaking India's crippling isolation that Swamiji undertook his pilgrimage to the United States in 1893 and delivered his famous speech at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in that year. Even in those days when America seemed to be so far off from India and certainly not in the vortex of world affairs as

she is today, Swamiji realized the spiritual kinship that existed between these two countries and that evoked such extraordinary response among the people here to his interpretation of Vedanta and India's true mission in the world. He had a vision of the role that America was going to play in the march of civilization in the years to come and also of India's national destiny. The following words of Swami Vivekananda sound prophetic today: "The country has fallen, no doubt, but will as surely rise again, and that upheaval will astound the world."

Vivekananda lived for some years in America, studying and preaching all the time, and may rightly be regarded as the prophet of Indo-American partnership the foundations of which were so firmly established by him more than half a century ago. Although India may appear today to be junior partner in the pursuit of liberty and democracy, let us not forget that the tradition of freedom and the practice of tolerance in India date back to hundreds of years before Columbus discovered America. In fact, the fundamental teaching of Vedanta is freedom—freedom from fear and freedom from all earthly bondage. Vivekananda enlarged the international horizon of intellectual India, and almost all the leaders of reascent India drank deep of the springs of Western thought and culture, and it is difficult to imagine finer products of this East-West synthesis than Gandhi and Tagore. Tagore was born two years before and Gandhi six years after Vivekananda, but because of the latter's premature death he seems to belong to an earlier generation.

THE SPIRITUAL EMPIRE OF RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE MODERN WORLD

Although a visionary and a globe-trotting monk, Vivekananda was intensely practical. He recognized the value of organization. That is why he established a monastic order, with the twin ideals of Renunciation and

Service, after the name of his Guru, known as Ramakrishna Mission. Swamiji died early, at the age of 39, and he could barely get together a few earnest colleagues and disciples to form this Mission before he died. And yet, the Mission has grown from strength to strength during the last fifty years. Not only has the Mission established numerous branches all over India, but its activities have extended to a number of foreign countries in Asia, Europe, North and South America.

Now, why has this organization endured, and why have its activities expanded? Surely, there must have been some universal appeal in Vivekananda's ideals and visions which inspired its establishment. He realized that science and technology, as developed in the West, would make it possible to give practical shape, through various social service activities, to such spiritual ideals as those of love of men and the divinity of the soul—ideas that lie at the very heart of Indian mysticism. Without the help of science, such ideals, in modern times, might very well remain mere abstractions. Therefore he saw the imperative necessity of importing into India from the West the techniques of science for the improvement of the material conditions of the Indian masses. He also realized that science and technology, unless based upon and inspired by spiritual idealism, beget lust for power and glory and become an engine of destruction. Thus he felt the supreme necessity of exporting from India to the West its ancient spiritual wisdom. Science and religion are two ways of realizing the same Truth, and they always act as correctives of each other's limitations and prejudices. The Ramakrishna Mission has been constantly working for achieving the unity of religion and science and has thus been fulfilling Vivekananda's ardent vision of the future world order. Today, when the world is standing at the crossroads of doubt and despair, the teachings of Swami Vivekananda take on fresh significance, and

the work of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Vedanta centres assume an ever increasing importance. The world would do well to ponder and heed the guiding principles which were formulated by this prophet of new India and of a new world.

MAHATMA GANDHI

BY PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA

Mahatma Gandhi was all his life a man of action, and he demonstrated in his life how a man can attain perfection and thoroughly spiritualize his being in the path of well-disciplined action (Karma Yoga). Moreover he is one the chief interest of whose life lay in the realization of the perfect peace, bliss, goodness, and beauty of the soul.—but who was almost throughout his life engaged in political and social warfare,—in initiating and leading and guiding big mass movements against the most formidable of worldly powers. He lived the life of a warrior; but he discovered such novel methods of war that these were not only not inconsistent with his pursuit of the highest moral and spiritual ideal of life, but were themselves converted into paths of self-purification, self-conquest, self-expansion, self-enlightenment, and spiritual self-fulfilment. His carrying on war after war accordingly meant a more and more intensive and extensive cultivation of truth and goodness, sympathy and goodwill, self-mastery and self-illumination, living faith in God, dynamic belief in the spiritual unity of mankind and the essential purity and beauty of the human soul, in the face of all possible demoralizing and despiritualizing forces of the world.

He demonstrated in his life how worldly duties of the most complicated nature, including even the duties of incessant fighting for noble causes, could be transformed into a Sadhana,—into efficient modes of spiritual self-discipline and self-realization. He used to say, 'My life is an indivisible whole, and

all my activities run into one another; and they all have their rise in my insatiable love of mankind'. Again, 'What I want to achieve (through all my activities) is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain Moksha. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end.'

Mahatma Gandhi described his own life as an unbroken series of 'Experiments with Truth'. His conception of Truth involved perfect and all-round purity in thought, word, and deed, under all circumstances. His innate spiritual nature inspired him in the prime of his life with the idea that Truth was the real essence of human life and that the aim of all human endeavours should be the realization of Truth in and through all forms of self-expression of human life under all kinds of circumstances. Truth which was immanent in the innermost spirit or soul of man was to be brought out in actual life through voluntary self-discipline and well-regulated systematic efforts and be given adequate expression in all the activities of the body, the senses, the mind, the heart, and the intellect. The entire life of a man in this world should accordingly be devoted to the systematic pursuit, in all the departments of practical life, of Truth which is inherent in and constitutes the essence of his innermost soul.

The autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi shows that there was little indication of his future greatness in the earliest part of his

life. He was born neither with any extraordinary intellectual genius nor with any extraordinary spirit of public service. He was an ordinary good-natured boy. Being born in a respectable and cultured family he inherited an unquestioning faith in God, a fine sense of dignity of character, a high regard for truthfulness, a generosity of heart, and a desire for being serviceable to others. He was brought up in a social atmosphere in which he happened to see truly good men of different religious communities mixing with one another on terms of the most cordial friendship and respecting one another's religious faiths and feelings. From their behaviour he learnt that devotion to one's own religion was in no way incompatible with respect for all other religions, and also that the general principles of morality were valued as of the utmost importance for higher spiritual culture by followers of every religious system.

Truth, Ahimsa, service to humanity, and faith in God—he learnt to look upon these as the cardinal virtues of man. In the later periods of his self-unfoldment he gradually realized that God is the real Truth of all existence, that God is not merely the omnipotent and omniscient creator and ruler of the world order, but He is essentially love and beauty in perfection, that true faith in God means the experience of this world order as the self-manifestation of divine love and beauty, and that selfless service to all the creatures of God must be the natural expression in practical life of devotion to Truth and faith in God. Accordingly his whole heart was full of God and the whole energy of his body and mind was dedicated to the service of humanity.

Shortly after his return from England, he went to South Africa on a professional call. Who then knew that this was really a divine call for his self-dedication to the service of humanity? There he felt most deeply under what humiliating conditions the people of India and other Asiatic countries had to live

owing to the arrogant sense of superiority and the undue love of self-interest of the European people. His heart was rudely shocked by the experiences of the insults and injustices hurled by certain sections of the white population upon large numbers of those weaker than themselves. He was pained to find how the children of God, with divinity innate in their spiritual nature, were being gradually dehumanized, demoralized, and despiritualized—some by their insolent denial of the inherent human rights and dignity of their fellow-beings, and others by their meek and ungrudging submission to this arrogance and to the insults and injustices inflicted on them. It struck him that those who were the cause of the sufferings of others and those who submitted to these sufferings as matters of course, without any earnest resistance, were both responsible for the continuance of the evils and injustices in human society.

In his heart of hearts he cultivated equal love for the oppressors and the oppressed. This love for man as man—man as the finest specimen of divine self-manifestation—and his strong sense of duty to pursue Truth in life prompted him to devote his energy to the awakening of the consciousness of true human dignity in his down-trodden and suffering fellowmen and of the spirit of civil resistance to all injustices, oppressions, and insults that might be inflicted on them; he also addressed himself to the task of rousing in the minds of those proud and arrogant fellow-beings of the white race, the moral and spiritual consciousness dormant in their nature and the spirit of justice, unity, equality, service, and sacrifice in relation to their less fortunate brothers and sisters. Here he conceived the idea of Satyagraha as a dynamic power for resisting and removing all untruths,—the injustices, corruptions, hatreds and counter-hatreds, exploitations and the sufferings,—prevailing in this world.

The unique success of Mahatma Gandhi lay in the fact that he experimented with this principle of Satyagraha not merely as a

method of the self-assertion of the moral and spiritual forces as against the materialistic ones in individual life, but as a brilliant weapon of mass revolution in the social and the political fields. He, with his followers, valiantly disobeyed the unjust laws and the oppressive orders of the Government and voluntarily courted imprisonment and all other hardships, without resorting to any violent methods and without giving way to any feeling of fear or despair or hatred towards the oppressors. He made an intensive and extensive study of the political, social, economic, educational, religious, and moral problems of India and took an active part in utilizing every opportunity for the application of his Satyagraha in wider fields.

As occasions for fighting against injustices and indignities arose, he proceeded onward with his 'Experiments with Truth'. He saw in untouchability and in the social disabilities of the lower class Hindus an awful social injustice and cruelty. He saw in the illiteracy of the vast masses of Indians a culpable negligence of duty on the part of the cultured classes. He saw in the mutual hatred and hostility of the castes and communities how the followers of every caste or community were in utter darkness about the essential truths of the religious systems they professed. He saw clearly how thereby all sections of the Indian people were playing into the hands of the foreign rulers and exploiters and were unwittingly harming themselves by oppressing each other. He was fully convinced that most of the evils in Indian life were ultimately due to the sad fact that Indians were not masters of themselves,—that foreigners, actuated by narrow selfish interests, became not only the masters of their economic resources, but also the masters of their heads and hearts. At such a critical time in the history of the nation, he was destined to lead the country through a most powerful revolutionary movement against one of the mightiest military, political, and economic powers of the world. This was his greatest experiment

with 'Truth and Non-violence'. He carried on this great political warfare on a country-wide scale for a long period. After the great Swami Vivekananda, the most powerful and inspiring influence in awakening the self-respect, self-confidence, fearlessness, and moral courage of all classes of Indian people was that of Gandhiji. As a result, their will to secure freedom, justice, and equality with all the nations of the world became indomitable.

Mahatma Gandhi would attach little value to political freedom unless the powers, resources, and opportunities which such freedom gave to each particular nation were utilized by it for the peace, harmony, unity, and prosperity of all the nations and for the intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, and economic development of all classes of people in the world. He very much wanted that Indians should be free from poverty and ignorance, weakness and wickedness, political and social inequalities and injustices, unhealthy competition, and passion for exploitation. All his energies were directed towards this great end.

Even in the course of his struggles for the political independence of his motherland and for the rectification of the wrongs done to the weak by the strong, he used to say: 'I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the kingdom of heaven, which is spiritual deliverance. For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. In the language of the *Gita*, I want to live at peace with friend and foe. So my patriotism is for me a stage on my journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace.' He loved and served every man—nay, every living being—individually as well as collectively, since he wanted to realize, at every moment of his life and with all his feeling and action, God as incarnated in His creation and the spiritual unity of himself with all the creatures of

God. This being the inner attitude with which he devoted himself to actions, he was never puzzled or perplexed, was never perturbed over the 'apparent' consequences of his particular actions, and never lost his equanimity even in the midst of intricacies which were bewildering to others. He worked in accordance with the dictates of his conscience and relied wholly on God with regard to the results of his works. His active life was a unique illustration of Karma Yoga taught by Sri Krishna in the *Gita*.

Mahatma Gandhi launched great movements, participated in historic conferences, gave advice to the world whenever necessary, and took part in vital negotiations; but he was never oblivious of other delightful and delicate aspects of life. He attended on leprosy patients, looked to the needs of the poor, played with youngsters, consoled the lowly, attended to his huge correspondence, and paid attention to the minutest things around him, despite his enormous responsibilities. This was Gandhiji's real greatness.

THE AVATARA AS HISTORY-MAKER

BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

A rational temper and approach, a spiritual aim and purpose, a passion for the welfare of man as man, and not as divided into sects and creeds, and, above all, a spirit of harmony and fellowship—these are some of the salient features of the religion and philosophy of the Upanishads,—features which have marked the Indian spiritual tradition with the stamp of the eternal and the perennial. As the earliest and most comprehensive exposition of this tradition, the *Bhagavad Gita* carries a weight and authority in India next only to the Upanishads. In the Upanishads we move in a world of thought—intense, rarefied, and pure, in whose atmosphere even the personalities of the thinkers get melted into the impersonal; moving on air, so thin and rare, the Rishis have left no visible footprints; their personalities have become fused with their thoughts and what we get is an impersonal or *apauruseya* body of truths, drawn from experience and tested by experience. This impersonal start has been like a rock-foundation to Indian spiritual tradition, enabling later centuries to erect a wide and lofty cultural edifice in the life

of a sixth of the human race. The foundation so laid has imparted to this edifice an element of stability and resilience, ensuring tenacity to meet tension and steadfastness to meet strain, and a continuity, through assimilative power, which is one of the wonders of world history. During the five thousand years of its history, storms have blown over it, invasions have battered it, subjection has humiliated it, and revolutions have convulsed it; edifices elsewhere have tumbled and crumbled in the past under a fraction of such impact; similar things are happening even in the present. But this one has not only stood them all, but every time has emerged stronger to greet the world with a new burst of energy. In the words of a distinguished thinker, history has demonstrated that India is ever aging but never old.

If, after five thousand years, the people of India feel the freshness and vigour of youth today and an era of struggle and achievement opening out before them tomorrow, the credit goes to the sages of the Upanishads for the enduring foundations which they furnished to the Indian national life at the very commencement of its career.

We will do well to remember these sages today and learn of them and pay them due homage for what they mean to us and to the world.

The Upanishadic atmosphere, though impersonal in itself, was yet the womb of a galaxy of personalities who have brightened up the sky of India in the succeeding eras. And the first of such was Sri Rama, the hero of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, and the second, Sri Krishna, the teacher of the *Gita*. These two heroes dominate the pages of Indian cultural history, being the most outstanding and most effective personalities for later ages. In them the Impersonal Idea of the Upanishads becomes defined as character and personality; the word becomes flesh. It is possible to study the Upanishads without reference to the personalities of the Rishis; but not so in the case of the teachings of the personalities beginning with Rama and Krishna. There is a close interrelation here between the teacher and the teaching; the teachers are not mere individuals but world-moving forces, being the condensations of their own ideologies. This is so also in the case of Buddha and Shankara, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. They are archetypal characters, representing a happy synthesis of the personal and the impersonal, in whom are focussed the spiritual and moral urges and loyalties of the age. These are the epoch-makers of Indian history, being the embodiments of its spiritual dynamics. Idea defined is character; character is definition in terms of personality. Ideas in the womb of the Upanishads become, as it were, defined as character in these personalities. Sri Krishna is the supreme example of this synthesis—a personality—warm, genial, vigorous, and human, and withal so impersonal. Viewed in the context of human history, the term *avatāra*, as applied to these outstanding heroes, seeks to convey this unique quality in the stature and dimension of their personalities. The Avatara or incarnation is the synthesis of the impersonal and

the personal, of the divine and the human; he is at once individual and universal.

One important feature of the Avatara concept, the one that is most significant from the point of view of cultural history, is the quality of dynamism associated with the term. The Avatara, unlike an ordinary saint, is not a static guide like a lighthouse; he is, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, a large-sized ship, capable of carrying thousands of people across the waters of life. He appears on the world scene to establish Dharma, in the words of Sri Krishna in the *Gita*; he sets in motion the wheel of Dharma, says Bhagavan Buddha in his first sermon. And the motive-force of both is the identical one of the happiness and welfare of millions—*sarvabhuta hita* or *bahu-jana hita* and *bahu-jana sukha*. Paradoxical as it may seem, the richness and fullness of their personalities is the product of their impersonal attitudes and motives which are the driving forces behind their life and action. 'I have nothing to gain in the three worlds, O Arjuna!' says Sri Krishna in the *Gita*, 'yet, I work incessantly, for the good of the world, and as an example to mankind'. Theirs is a standing example which validates the ethical truth that the height of a personality is directly proportional to the depth of its impersonality; to find life, we have to lose it first.

The Avatara, as understood in India, is an epoch-maker, a spiritual dynamo from which emanates man-making and nation-making forces. In him philosophy as idea becomes transformed into philosophy as will and purpose and endeavour. If philosophy as idea is primarily concerned with interpreting the world, philosophy as will and purpose is deeply interested in the transformation of it in terms of its idea. The Avatara as epoch-maker is the fusion of idea and will and endeavour; and this is also the definition for Ishvara or God in the Vedanta—He is the synthesis of Jnana, Ichcha, and Kriya (knowledge, will, and action). All men

of effective character are dynamos of such synthesis in more or less degree; but their powers are limited in scope and circumscribed in motive, being not wholly free from the limitations of personality. Unlike them, however, the Avatara functions as a perennial source of power and beneficence in a whole epoch, and continues to be a source of general inspiration ever after.

It will thus be seen that the Marxian distinction between philosophers that merely interpret the world and those that transform it has long been known and acted upon in India. In this, we were Marxists long before Marxist philosophy was born in Europe. The Avatara, according to Indian thought, is the world transformer; in him idea becomes yoked to will, purpose, and endeavour. He does not merely contemplate the world; he works with a view to change it. The materialistic philosophy and approach of Marxism, with its faith in naked violence and hatred, and the spiritual view and approach of Indian thought, with its faith in the innate goodness and educability of man, differ widely in methods and results, in spite of starting with common objectives. 'In its concern for the poor and the lowly,' observes Dr. Radhakrishnan, 'in its demand for a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunity, in its insistence on rational equality, it gives us a social message with which all idealists are in agreement. But our sympathy for the social

programme does not necessarily commit us to the Marxist philosophy of life, its atheistic conception of ultimate Reality, its naturalistic view of man, and its disregard of the sacredness of personality.'¹

The Vedanta understands and appreciates the Marxian passion for human betterment. Whether we search into the theoretical statements of its objectives or into the practical conduct of its exemplars, we shall never miss this human element in this philosophy whose quest is for a truth which will most conduce to human happiness and welfare and whose passion is to verify its truth in life and society. And that truth it finds in the unity and solidarity of existence. The social outlook and programme of the Vedanta, proceeding as they do from this truth, and periodically set in motion by its greatest exemplars, the Avataras, naturally tend to ease the tensions and conflicts obtaining in a society through its insistence on the values of freedom, equality, and the sacredness of personality, and through the spiritual direction it gives to surplus social energies. The Avatara thus is the dominating spiritual hero of an epoch, who functions as the dynamic source of a creative social process and the sustenance and guide of an equalitarian social order. (*By courtesy* : All India Radio).

¹ Radhakrishnan : *Religion and Society*.

'... I want the intensity of the fanatic plus the extensity of the materialist. Deep as the ocean, broad as the infinite skies, that is the sort of heart we want. Let us be as progressive as any nation that ever existed and at the same time as faithful and conservative towards our traditions as Hindus alone know how to be.'

THE VEDANTIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS OF CIVILIZATION

BY SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

Contemporary students of Man have been asking the question, 'Is civilization to be judged by the nature and number of problems it creates for man or by its skill to make life simpler and easier? In either case what is the spiritual fruitage of civilization for man?' Our civilization has reaped unprecedented successes, but along with it has brought into life unprecedented complications and problems newer than ever before. No doubt man's capacity to create and solve new problems has a spiritual content and this marks off the civilized man from his ancient forbear. But has man used his capacity in a way that nourishes his inner strength and spirituality and beautifies the outer world? It is a psychological truth that a mind ill-fed is more pernicious than a mind unfed. The frustrations of the modern man have been aggravated by the maladies of an ill-fed mind. No external cure can hope to remedy this frustration and those who suggest that the complexities of modern life can be resolved from outside are tackling the symptoms and not the disease. Civilization is man's response to environments and the process of simplification must start from within. Shifting the whole burden to scientific developments is unhelpful. Our effort in the following paragraphs will be to gain a full vision of the stature and significance of man in his ascent through civilization and to bring this new meaning of civilization to the solution of problems that have cropped up due to man's missing the true vision of himself.

CIVILIZATION AS STRUGGLE

If we are disappointed and distressed today to see civilization making life a greater struggle than ever before, it is because we have not got the courage to look into the soul

of its growth. The rhythm of all growth is success punctuated by struggle. Walt Whitman apprehended this rhythm when he wrote, 'It is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary'. As civilization advances, a greater and more intense struggle becomes necessary for two reasons: Every advance towards maturity shows up more clearly, in whatever shadowy form, the existence of the immature; secondly, success always carries with it the seeds of greater success and it is only through struggle that these seeds are nurtured and nourished to achievement. But then is success self-functioning? Who cognizes the maturity or otherwise in the path of progress and who operates the dynamism that enlivens and moves civilization?

Philosophy and religion have answered these questions by formulating the 'whence' and 'how' of creation. Who is the cause and prime mover of this creation, how does He move it and to what purpose, are important problems in philosophy. Philosophy answers them through reason, and religion through intuition. Philosophers have called the origin of creation, the uncaused cause, the unmoved mover of creation, which is beyond time, space, and causation. Religions have called it God, Ishwara. Poets have styled it the Eternity that shapes human ends, and Hindus have named it Brahman. Names may differ, but the principle is the same. The source of creation must be a dynamic perfection which is undiminished by creation and always exceeds it. Then again creation must be purposive which means that it must have a powerful 'instinct' for perfection and must be steadily moving towards it. This means that the source and goal of creation

are the same, namely perfection. If the origin and fulfilment of man are the same, then no progress or movement can be spoken of him. Indeed that is the first and last word of Advaita Vedanta, that man is already perfect and that all talk of progress and perfection about him is irrelevant. Yet man does not know this great fact about himself and makes all efforts to realize it. Until he comes by this realization, progress and perfection are full of meaning to him and so he moves up the 'spiral' of evolution. We say spiral advisedly because only a spiral movement will satisfy the conditions of progress for man: Perfection is both vertical and horizontal. Man must have scope for a vertical movement, and in his horizontal growth he must keep always the same distance from the centre of creation (which is his own centre). Such a movement is possible only in a spiral. Between Brahman, the central pillar of the spiral, and Prakriti (Nature), the outer rim, man moves up making civilization, changing history. One generation hands over the heritage of its successes and failures to the other and thus the moving spirit of man climbs up the spiral. William Morris pictured this spiral beautifully when he said, 'I pondered ... how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out to be not what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name'. Thus man moves up the spiral of civilization, and in his ascent what animates and directs him is Brahman, the measure of all values in creation and the eternal witness to the march of history.

VEDANTIC VIEW OF CIVILIZATION

The Vedanta, in its empirical plane of discussion, accepts the spiral theory of civilization as one of the factors of its working hypothesis. According to Vedanta, Brahman the supreme unchanging Spirit, is the centre and unmoving mover of creation. It throws

round it the spiral of Nature, the Prakriti which is the tangible universe, the aggregate of primeval subtle elements, earth, water, fire, air, and ether, with all their permutations and combinations. Brahman also projects the individual man with his mind, intellect, and the 'I' sense. The important fact about this spiral is that Brahman and Nature have no beginnings (*prakṛtim puruṣam caiva viddhyanādī ubhāvapi*) and so no progress can be predicated of them both. They are the same and unchanged at any point of the spiral, in the sense that all distances between the centre and the circumference of the spiral are the same. Even so Brahman and Nature are the same at any point in history. There is no addition to or subtraction from the uncreate Brahman; and the elemental Nature is just the same now as at the time of creation and it will be the same centuries after. (The discovery of electrons and protons cannot change the fundamental character of the elements.)

This is not to say that civilization is impossible. Civilization is man's response to the unmoving silent sentinels of his growth, Brahman and Nature, and the quality of civilization depends on the nature of man's response to these inspirers of history. The unchanging and unprogressive Brahman and Nature provide the essential condition for the moving of civilization. They remain stationery, thus offering the frame for man to move up with his civilization. Brahman is eternity, above time; but this eternity must be validated in the accents of time. Brahman is beyond Nature; it is the spaceless, causeless, and timeless reality. But it is in and through the matrix of the space-time-cause complex that this reality is known. To know Brahman as validating itself through space-time is to know it as history-maker. Thousands of years of history make a tradition. Thousands of years of tradition make a culture and culture takes its rise from Brahman, the

Imperishable (*ācara prabhavo dharmah; dharmasya prabhuracyuta*). Culture in one aspect is valuation, in another expression. Valuations change with changing experience. Every age has its own valuations, its own appraisal of the things worth-while, revealed in its literature, in its thought forms, in its social movements that characterize it. These change with times. Moreover, the mode of expression, the style of culture is inherently changeful. And thus between one country and another, cultures, traditions, and morality vary with time. As Swami Vivekananda observes, 'Society is just a passing phase'. Society is only a time-sequence, it is a becoming, not a being, a process and not a product. But the fundamental hungers and aspirations of the human soul which put on the clothes of valuation and expression are the golden thread that runs through the process and bear eternal witness to human history. These aspirations do not change with time or country. Why? In these deepest and real longings of the human soul is reflected the face of Brahman, the unchanging Reality. Human society feeling its way up through different stages of civilization is materializing the beauties of this face in the values of social life. And the more such beauties are realized the greater is that society. We shall show in the sequel how this conception of civilization as a movement between Brahman and Nature furnishes us the correct spiritual background to understand man's efforts in civilization and vouchsafes to man a freedom that makes him use it for purposes of self-discovery. Civilization gives infinite scope for man to choose between truth and error and to advance from lesser truth to higher truth.

HISTORY : MAN'S SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Maya theory which forms the crux of the Advaita Vedanta presents man in an eternal effort to realize his inner spiritual

worth. The Maya theory compels us to a spiritual interpretation of history. Maya is not simply illusion as many understand it. It is the dynamism (Shakti) of Brahman for self-manifestation; Maya is Brahman's anxiety for perfecting man, though one must be outside the pale of Maya to correctly understand its purpose. Man's ignorance of Maya's true purpose and of his own reality make him see himself as separated from the All, the Brahman. He feeds his partial limited desires and tastes. Maya is the aggregate of these individual ignorances, tastes, and desires or which is the same thing, Maya creates in man his individuality. Even as the prism splits the white rays of the sun into the numerous beautiful colours of the rainbow, Maya splits the white radiance of Eternity, and makes life a dome of many-coloured glass. The Lord clarifies the position when he explains to the devotee in a context, 'The Maya is My creation. I created it so that you can see Me in My varied colours of good and evil and can grow into My Being.' If the Lord or Brahman preferred to remain *One*, then who could have seen and appreciated whom? So the multiplicity that the Maya throws round has a history of a divine purpose working for human perfection. Maya unravels the purposive dynamism of Brahman, it unfolds the purpose in history. History is thus moving God, walking Christ. In human history God unfolds Himself as an eternal opportunity for man for self-education, self-discovery, and conquest. The world is out there for conquering it; it is not to be shunned. Evil is there in the world, not to be blinked. It is a necessary part of Maya; for freedom to choose evil is a necessary part of man's spiritual growth. A knowing non-participation with evil can only take man to a knowing and conscious participation in the good. Thus Maya or history is a spiritual training ground for man, the ground of his salvation; for Maya partakes of the spiritual power of redemption that is in

Brahman. This is the increasing purpose in history, the progressive spiritualization of man's life, activities, and purposes through a conscious participation in and expansion of the spiritual awareness in himself. One fact emerges from the above, namely, the supreme need for the deification of the world as the ground of salvation (*samsāra eṣa Bhagavān apavarga eva*) and of looking on every action as a step towards the goal divine.

How will man achieve the above objectives? Moving between the two boundaries of his perfection, one, the Spirit, his foundational essence and reality, and, the other, Nature, his physical mother, whom shall he obey? Is man, the crown and fulfilment of creation, to be influenced by Nature? or is he to approximate himself to the Spirit? Is he to incarnate the values of the Spirit or flow along the current of Nature? This has been the one question before man since civilization began and the hero in man has always chosen to go against Nature, to ally himself with Spirit, and to build a civilization on spiritual values. If today we do not see much evidence of spiritual values in civilization it is because the modern man has become 'tired', tired of everything, even of his life. The blood of idealism and of the Spirit in him has become old and weak and must be rejuvenated by the surge of a new life from the Spirit. And for this he must recapture the faith that civilization can only be built on spiritual values and that the function and purpose of civilization is to bring out more and more of the best and highest in man. Today we have forgotten this redeeming fact about civilization and so have landed ourselves in frustration. The way out is by seeing civilization as a spiritual opportunity given to man for self-conquest and self-discovery and for the sublimation of his lower impulses. The channel for self-expression which civilization offers today must be made the path for self-sublimation.

HINDU SOCIOLOGY AND THE SPIRITUAL VIEW OF HISTORY

Hindu sociology also supports the spiritual view of civilization. Hindu sociology compares human society to a triangle whose apex is Brahman and whose base is Dharma. The ideal of society must be to approximate itself to Brahman-consciousness through the practise of Dharma. The social values in life (Purusharthas) like Artha (wealth) and Kama (pleasure) are only means to be pursued through Dharma. And these Dharmaic pursuits must nourish in man the highest end, the Brahman-regarding sentiment, so that he sees society as Narayana Himself. Today unfortunately, society is the battle-field of forces released by the Kama-regarding and Artha-regarding sentiments in man. The scale of values has become topsy-turvy: the instinct for pleasure and power has been overfed and has become so uncontrollable that it threatens to swallow up life itself. That society is the best where the highest ideals are practised and the noblest values are brought into being, says Swami Vivekananda. Art, music, literature, and drama must picture the conquest of the lower man by the nobler man and thereby exhort in men sublimation through self-chastening catharsis. Such high art brings out the spiritual idealism in men and women and a society which offers such artistic pleasure throws up men and women who carry society nearer to the spiritual goals of civilization. Such was the society that threw up a Krishna, Buddha, or Christ. History bears ample testimony that the affirmation of spiritual values in society has always led to the flowering forth of the most ennobling art, architecture, and literature. The Mohenjo-daro civilization, the golden age of the Guptas, and Europe of the Middle ages are instances of society which brought about an efflorescence of art and literature as a result of the resuscitation of spiritual values. But where art and music mirror and cater to the lower instincts of man, they

carry with them germs of aesthetic futility and social frustration, though the advent of such types are acclaimed by a section with bells of popular approbation.

COMMUNISM PUTS THE CLOCK BACK

Thus we find that while the Vedantic view of civilization asks us to take to it as a spiritual opportunity for manifesting and cultivating the higher values in man with the end of realizing that man is the highest end of civilization (*na mānuṣāt śreṣṭhataram hi kincit*), Hindu sociology exhorts us to steer society through Dharma to Brahman-consciousness. Man's relation to the highest in himself—that is the compass with whose help man should charter the sea of life, individual and social. That again is the term of reference for the co-operative adventure that is civilization. But today we find we are at the very antipodes of this ideal. The materialistic interpretation of history and the doctrine of economic determinism which are the philosophical foundations of communism have to-day gained alarming currency and captured popular imagination as though by storm. In the *Communist Manifesto*, we come across the key sentence: 'It is economic conditions that make consciousness and not consciousness that creates the economic conditions'. According to the communist philosophy, spirit is an emergence from matter and is called epiphenomenon. Soul is the product of the conditions of life obtaining in society and the communist philosophy and philosophers claim to change history by controlling the material conditions of life. We do not for a moment belittle the importance of material conditions in moulding life and consciousness, but to give them the priority which the above school of thought gives, is to speak of a philosophy that lives and marches on man's stomach. The Golden Age in society, the communists believe, will come by the rule of the proletariat and this again is to be ushered in through war and revolution, not through a change of

heart. The 'haves' are the expropriated and for 'expropriating the expropriated', that is, snatching power from the capitalists, violent means are to be employed. An ideology that believes in permanent struggle and revolution and marches on man's stomach cannot be expected to bring in for humanity values that are worthwhile for life. Nevertheless, the programme of revolutionary social change, as also the extreme pseudo-democratic appeal in communism have taken the popular mind by storm and is widening the circle of its adherents. The mass mind has not got the patience or the intellectual stamina to go to the roots of this doctrine and discover its social futility and explosive possibilities. One of the serious problems of civilization is to humanize this menacing doctrine of communism. The Vedantic approach can achieve this task.

MERITS OF THE VEDANTIC VIEW

We now sum up the merits of the Vedantic view of civilization over all other current views. The pessimistic philosophers of history led by Oswald Spengler maintained that civilization is the last stage, the dying embers of culture. Civilization and urbanization are the final stages of man's degeneracy. And so science will have to return to its cradle so that a new age of culture may begin. The Vedanta does not ask of science this impossible feat; it presses science into its service. No stage of civilization is degenerate for Vedanta, for it is the never-old and ever-young Spirit in man that charges civilization with the new blood at every stage of its progress. According to Vedanta, civilization is not a closed system as it is with Spengler: the unflagging dynamism of the Spirit in man inflates civilization with spiritual content and purpose at all stages. The Vedantic view holds the palm over the communist view of civilization also. Communism claims to change history, but this it endeavours to do by pressing economic factors to

contemporary context with its faith in the supremacy of matter. Communism thus misses the self-transcending power of the Spirit which can regenerate society and civilization. Nay, it misses the spirit itself and misses the bus. We have no patience with those who suggest that if Vedanta wants to live in the modern context, it must be made the spiritual basis for communism. These people are anxious to evolve a new creed, the Vedantic Communism! Shall Vedanta go a-begging for a social philosophy or social programme so that it may 'live'? Whatever communism can offer as a social philosophy is already there in the Vedanta. It need not have to borrow anything from any other. On the positive side, the Vedantic view lays its finger on individual responsibility and self-effort by picturing civilization as the path of the human soul to its divine destiny.

FOUNDATIONS OF A PROSPEROUS CIVILIZATION

In an effort to combat the tide of communism we find today half the world developing the mood of militarism. The race for armaments is gaining speed. A Greek formula summarizes the decline of civilization in three words: Surfeit, outrageous behaviour, and disaster. Surfeit has come to us as a nemesis of extraordinary and explosive activity. Subjectively it means the psychological condition of being spoilt by success. Outrageous behaviour means the consequent loss of mental and moral balance; and disaster means the blind, headstrong, ungovernable impulse which sweeps an unbalanced mind into attempting the impossible. Today these three stages have culminated in militarism, the last infirmity of decadent civilizations. History bears ample testimony to the fact that when societies are on the incline of decay, they pass into the suicidal mood of militarism. The Assyrians brought ruin on themselves, by not allowing their armours to 'rust'. Their aggressiveness exhausted them, besides ren-

dering them intolerable to their neighbours. So was the case with the Austrasian Franks, Lanka, and Rome. The *Bhagavad Gita* pictures the suicidal temper of militaristic civilizations in its definition of the uncivilized (Asuri) man: 'Intoxicated with ostentation, self-esteem, arrogance, self-conceit, anger, and insolence, the uncivilized man says, "that enemy has been slain by me; and others also shall I slay. I am the lord, I enjoy; I am strong and healthy. Who is there equal to me?"'. But the civilized (Daivi) man, according to the *Gita*, with the virtues of forgiveness, absence of pride and anger, purity, fortitude, and fearlessness lays the foundations of a prosperous civilization.

It is here that civilization enters into our private lives as a call to self-analysis and self-discipline. Civilization charges us with great responsibilities of self-chastening and universal vision. We had occasion to say, in the beginning, that civilization is man's response to his environment. The quality of our civilization will depend on the spirituality of our response. The time has come when the modern man cannot escape this reality. The best scientific skill and the highest philosophical vision are ours today. Can we not use these rare endowments of ours to discover the dignity of the individual and to practise it, to proclaim the unity that lies behind the congeries of peoples, nations, and cultures and desist from mutual disparagement? Today nations are engaged in running down one another for their ideology, for their way of life: 'This nation is decadent, that nation is retrogressive'. Mutual condemnation is not the way to pave for a world-family and world peace. Nor shall we achieve it by taking hold of violent political 'isms' to effect the change of heart. Diversity is the very fabric of creation and the capacity to see another man's view-point is the very test of culture. A preparedness for mutual understanding and appreciation between cultural groups

and nations, and respect for the other party's views and convictions are the very conditions for corporate living and achievement. The vision of Vedantic unity demands of us such understanding and respect. It exhorts us to see the Man behind men, the Religion behind religions, the Culture behind cultures. It demands of us the translation of this vision in love, mutual respect, and good neighbourliness. The

responsibilities of the civilized man are great, but the compensations are greater. It is in meeting a challenge that we develop our inner growth and it is by successive and successful responses to challenges that we grow morally and spiritually. It requires courage in us not to forget that it is difficult and not easy conditions that bring out the best in us and produce achievements.

THE DIVINE DANCE OF NATARAJA

BY P. SAMA RAO

INTRODUCTION

The composition under translation relates to Sri Nataraja's Dance, in all the four quarters of Kailasa, as detailed in the thirty-third chapter of *Shiva-Rahasya*.

Shiva-Rahasya is not a Purana, though it relates Shiva's eminence through the lips of his son Kumara, and resembles the *Mahabharata*, which has made some savants claim the place of a Purana for it. The want of classical restraint and easy flow of diction, coupled with the absence especially of descriptions of creation, cosmogony, etc. confirm more its epical than its Puranic nature. At best it could be an addendum to either *Shiva Purana* or *Linga Purana*.

The author has not been traced, nor the exact date of this work fixed beyond dispute. The internal evidence of the text, such as the Dravidian style of the temple architecture described, and the mention of ornaments like the 'Chintaka', point to the author being a Dravidian, roughly of the Vijayanagar times. On this basis he may belong to the early decades of the fifteenth century. He seems to have been a great Advaitin, well versed in music and other fine arts.

So far only two manuscripts seem to have been discovered : one of the Mysore Oriental

Library, and the other recently published by some Pandits of Madras. This translation follows the text of the Mysore edition, published in Kannada in 1946 in the Sri Jaya Chamarajendra Series.

The author is poetic, though always he does not conform strictly to rules of Sanskrit poetics. There are, of course, some ecstatic hymns such as the 'Chintamani-Stuti', addressed to the Lord, which have been rendered here, though quite meagrely.

The verses setting out the Lord's 'divine dance' in each of His great Pavilions—the Golden, the Bejewelled, the Silvery, and the Chit—contain refrains like '*Nṛtyamtam rajatādri-hemasadasi Śrī Dhūrjatim bhāvaye*', which easily admit of being rendered into song.

SHIVA-RAHASYA

Skanda¹ relates to Jaigisha and others,—

In the joyous assembly of Sanatana, Sanandana, and others, Maheshwara, the Lord of Lords, the delight of Parvati's heart, sits blissful, imparting bliss to them all. (1)²

¹ Same as Shanmukha, Kartikeya, or Kumara.

² The figure in brackets at the end of each verse refers to the number of the verse in the original text mentioned in the 'Introduction'.

Maheshwara, the Lord of all assemblies, is blissful; He is attended upon by all the celestial hordes. I also serve him along with Nandi, Bhringi, Ritishwara, Ganapati, and others. (2)

Tandu, Hunda, Tuhunda, Bana, Ravana, Chandika, and others also serve the Lord. Amidst this assembly of celestials and directly in the presence of His Devi, the Lord begins to dance. (3)

Sabhāsu tāsu sarvāsd sabhāpatirumāpatih, Sāyam sāyam pradoṣeṣu mahātāṇḍava-panditah. (4)

This Lord of Uma, the Lord of every assembly and the great Master of Dance, dances without fail during every evening twilight. (4)

Apasmaropari lasatpādapañkaja bhāsurah, Gajendrakṛttivasano jatājūtataṭidytih. (5)

Clad in the elephant-hide and trampling Apasmara, the demon of darkness, with one of His lotus-feet, He shines during dance with the lightning flashes of His flowing tresses. (5)

A-swell with waves river Ganga sways In the dark cave of the Lord's tresses, Where lie ensconced lotuses full-blown Together with the sun who has 'blown' them. (6)

The poison inside stains the Lord's neck blue; Adishesha, the serpent, decks His ears; Lustrous is His face like the full moon; And His nose like the golden Champaka frond Is straight and tender and very charming. (7)

His eyes are more beautiful than the full-oped Lotus blossom; His body's Bhasma³-covered; His forehead's Tripundra-rayed; they're ashine. (8)

The fingers of His left hand have their nails Painted red with Laksha-rasa duly. Ardhanarishwara⁴ He is; on His left side

The bejewelled garlands that loosely hang Decking Him, are sparkling with delight. (9)

The Rudraksha-wreaths interwoven with Hira-ratnas⁵ shine around His neck; But the garland strung of Naga-ratnas⁶ Lights up His neck too, only to a side. (10)

The bejewelled garland around His neck, The wristlet bangles made of purest gold. And the jingling band strung of tiny bells Round His waist, are all sweetly ashine. (11)

In one of His hands He holds the Damaru; In 'nother the luminous seven-tongued⁷ fire; The be-splintered halo of the Fire-god⁸ Darts out in rays from His coiffure-crest. (12)

He bears one of His hands in 'protective pose'⁹ The begemmed rings on His fingers glisten; And the tiger-skin¹⁰ round His loins simply glows! (13)

The tuft of hair on the tail of the skin Is long, and stresses its holy beauty; The wreath of demons¹¹ skulls, with 'Brahma-skull'¹² Centred therein, glows round His tender neck. (14)

The jewelled tiny bells that deck His feet Jingle sweet; bending round His waist in stunning dance The Lord of Lords, protects the triune world. (15)

During His dance the Lord sends out a glance From out of His half-oped lotus eyes To Maheshwari, His Beloved, ensconced On Her bejewelled lustrous throne. (16)

⁵ Pure rubies.

⁶ Gems from cobras' hoods.

⁷ Vadavāgni, the Primeval Fire used for burning everything at the end of Time.

⁸ Agni, the Primeval Priest who is invoked to bless every religious rite.

⁹ Abhaya-hasta, which indicates the divine assurance: 'Have no fear'.

¹⁰ Symbolic of Yogic austerity.

¹¹ Rakshasas are devotees of Lord Shiva. He wears their skulls as a token of affection for them.

¹² Brahma-kapāla.

³ Ash.

⁴ Half male, half female in form.

Her pearl-set nose-screw is brighter than
The new-born Venus star; while the three
lines
On Her neck outshine the three gemmed
garlands 'round. (18)

The cloth of gold the Devi wears
Is brighter than Antatriksha¹³;
Champaka, Ashoka, Punnāga¹⁴,
And Saugandhika¹⁵ deck Her tresses. (21)

The Ratna-Simantini¹⁶ mid Her tresses
Is lovely indeed! Pretty forelocks hang
O'er Her brow, whose beauty is enhanced
By the Sindura¹⁷ crescent placed thereon. (22)

Her armlets are bejewelled serpent-forms;¹⁸
The begemmed bangles encircling Her wrists
Are flashy, and like garlands dangle loose.
(23)

Bejewelled rings encircle with light
Her fingers; and the Angulikas¹⁹ set
With slabs of rubies shine athwart Her
thumbs. (24)

The earth resounds with the melodious tinkle
Of the gem-set tiny bells around Her feet;
Surfeit is the air with the sweet perfume
Of Agaru²⁰ and Karpura, Chandana and
Kasturi. (26)

Hallākakrāntasukarām tathānyena vilambinā
Pāsāñkuśābhayavaradharām Śrī Bhuvā-
neśvarīm. (28)

In one of Her hands Saugandhika²¹ She bears;
The other by Her side hangs gracefully loose;
Two of Her hands in 'beneficance'²² and
'protection' are;
While the rest two, the 'Ankusha'²³ and the
Pāsha²⁴ hold;
Thus the lovely Mother of the worlds stuns
us all! (28)

Niryatkaṭākṣāñkuratah paśyantī
mānanam vibhoh,
Paśyan-sabhāsu tām Devīm sadā nṛtyati
Śaṅkarah. (29)

The Devi covers the Lord with Her sweet
glance;
And He, ever glancing back tenderly at Her,
Does His dance in every pavilion of His. (29)

Mahākāla,²⁵ Ganapati, Skanda, Bhṛngi,
Nandi,
And a host of other celestials ever attend
On the Lord, when He, to the tune of music
and Vedas,
Conducts in His pavilions His inimitable
dance. (30)

Sometimes the Lord dances with His divine
spouse,
In His assemblies. O Ye peerless Rishis and
gods,
Listen now to the great beauty of His dance
Which I shall with immense pleasure relate.
(28)

(To be continued)

²¹ Lily.

²² Varada-hasta, pose of giving.

²³ Goad.

²⁴ Rope, symbolic of power and liberation.

²⁵ 'Great Time'—eternity.

¹³ Lunar region.
¹⁴ Nāga-Champaka creeper.
¹⁵ Begemmed plait flower.
¹⁶ White lily, resembling big jasmine flower.
¹⁷ Vermilion or red saffron powder.
¹⁸ Nāgābharanas—armlets of cobra shape.
¹⁹ Broad rings for thumbs.
²⁰ Compound of musk and other perfumes.

'All doubts disappear when one sees God. It is one thing to hear of God, but quite a different thing to see Him. A man cannot have one hundred per cent. conviction through mere hearing. But if he beholds God face to face, then he is wholly convinced.'

—Sri Ramakrishna

RAMACHANDRA DATTA : A DISCIPLE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY A DEVOTEE

Ramachandra Datta occupies a prominent place among the lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna whom he met for the first time in 1879. The Ramakrishna Yogodyana at Kānkurgachhi in the suburbs of Calcutta, now a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Math, was founded by this lay disciple in 1883. This spiritual retreat was sanctified by Sri Ramakrishna's visit and enshrines part of the Master's sacred relics. The Master's teachings were compiled and published by him in 1885. A Bengali monthly, called *Tattva-Manjari*, was started by this enthusiastic disciple in 1885 and successfully conducted for over a quarter of a century, devoted to the spread of Sri Ramakrishna's message. The first biography of Sri Ramakrishna, in Bengali, was written by Ramachandra Datta in 1890. Ramachandra Datta was a cousin of Swami Vivekananda and introduced the latter to Sri Ramakrishna. He met Sri Ramakrishna for the first time along with another cousin of his, Manamohan Mitra, also a prominent lay disciple of the Master.

Ramachandra Datta was born in a Kayastha family of Calcutta in October 1851. His grandfather, Kunja Bihari Datta, a resident of Narikeldanga in Calcutta, was a devout Vaishnava, learned in Sanskrit. Ramachandra's father, Nrisimha Prasad, though learned, became penniless after the death of Kunja Bihari. Straited circumstances compelled him to sell even the paternal house in Calcutta.

Ramachandra's mother, Tulsimani Devi, was a devoted and kind-hearted lady. If any deserving beggar came to her door at the time of her taking meals, she would give away her own food and fast that day with great pleasure. This used to happen many a time. Ramachandra's mother died when

he was only two and a half years old, and the child Ramachandra was brought up by other near relatives. Though his father married again, he was never seen to be happy as before.

As a boy Ramachandra was educated at Calcutta and lived for some time in the paternal home of Narendra Nath Datta (later Swami Vivekananda). His boyhood was spent in difficulties, and he was generally reluctant to talk to others about those poverty-stricken early days. The truth of the saying 'The child is father of the man' was once more proved in the case of Ramachandra. As a boy his favourite game was the worship of gods and goddesses. Sometimes he would decorate the small image of deities with flowers etc. and worship them. Sometimes he would dress himself as a Gopi and dance before the image of Krishna. Then again he would offer fruits and sweets to his deity and distribute them among his playmates.

Ramachandra used to frequent a garden and a hermitage near his home, where he came into close contact with Sadhus of different Orders who halted there in the course of their travels. The Sadhus too loved the young boy very much for his devotion and religious fervour. For, even as a lad, Ramachandra showed great determination and courage of conviction, so much so that even elders could not persuade him to act in a way in which he did not believe. When he was just ten years old, he refused to yield to the importunities of an elderly relative of his who had served him with non-vegetarian food while Ramachandra was on a visit to the relative's house. Ramachandra, a devout Vaishnava, averse to ever taking such food, was so much upset that he left the relative's house forthwith in vehement pro-

test. Not having enough money, and not being aware of the way back to Calcutta, little Ramachandra, undaunted by the difficulties of lack of food and money, managed to take shelter at a stranger's house and finally reached home next day.

Ramachandra studied up to the Entrance class in the General Assembly's Institution and entered the Campbell Medical School, Calcutta, from where he passed out with credit. He first took up an employment at Pratapnagar, and was then appointed as an assistant to the Government Quinine Examiner. Ramachandra studied chemistry under this officer, with great diligence, and mastered the subject within a short period. While in Government service, Ramachandra prepared a new indigenous drug which was unanimously recognized and commended by leading members of the medical profession. Ramachandra was also engaged to teach the military medical students of the Government Medical College, Calcutta, and in due course was appointed Government Chemical Examiner. In addition to his Government service, Ramachandra took keen interest in studying science and spreading scientific knowledge among young men. He used to deliver learned lectures, in English and Bengali, on scientific subjects.

His great enthusiasm for science and modern knowledge at first made Ramachandra turn almost an atheist. In his 'Life of Sri Ramakrishna' he writes: 'In those days we did not believe in God, Nature being considered sufficient to explain the universe. We were rank materialists and we held creature comforts to be the summum bonum of life.' He supported and substantiated his atheistic views with such convincing arguments and vehemence that many of his friends were afraid of discussing religion with him lest they should lose their faith in God.

As a young man Ramachandra was fond of innocent amusements which always kept him cheerful. Along with his friends he orga-

nized an amateur theatrical party and became its director. He would take part in plays, train the actors, and occasionally write the scripts himself. Though he was a successful actor and took part in mythological dramas, he had little faith in idolatry or in the plurality of gods and goddesses. His atheistic views persisted for four or five years after his appointment in the Chemical Department of the Government Medical College. He was then earning sufficient money to lead a comfortable life and had little to worry about.

But nothing in this world is permanently lasting. Soon Ramachandra came into grips with the hard realities of mundane existence. The death of a beloved daughter of his plunged him into deep grief. His rosy dreams were shattered, and he saw darkness and misery all around. It was the dark new moon night of the Kali Puja day. The clear sky was studded with twinkling stars and the houses were garlanded with rows of lighted lamps. Illumination above and below had by contrast deepened the darkness of the night. Nature had put on an exquisitely dark hue in full consonance with the divine form of Mother Kali. Though Ramachandra was a worshipper of Nature, his mind now wanted to tear off the outer veil of phenomena and penetrate to the very source of existence. 'Is there a God? If so, can He be known?'—these questions suddenly began to haunt him. But what is the way of finding God and knowing Him? Ramachandra decided to find an answer.

While this tempest was raging in Ramachandra's bosom, his family preceptor one day came to his house. With eager expectation Ramachandra asked his preceptor the following question: 'I doubt very much the existence of God. Can you show me the way to find Him?' The preceptor was naturally struck dumb by this startling question. He was at his wit's end and did not know what to say in reply. Another companion of his explained to Ramachandra

that the preceptor was an expert only in religious ceremonies and did not know anything about the way to reach God. Ramachandra was down with despair. He studied many books dealing with the intricate paths of various sects and creeds, but could get no satisfactory answer to his inner queries of the soul. One day he came across a Yogi who, hearing of his mental conflict, said, 'My dear, the disease that has assailed you cannot be cured by any human physician. If Lord Shiva Himself becomes your teacher he can relieve you of this conflict.' Ramachandra did not then take these words seriously, but understood later their prophetic meaning.

The Lord heard the devotee's sincere prayer, uttered with deep yearning, and Himself opened out the smooth way before him. As Ramachandra was being tormented by these conflicts, he chanced to come across a copy of the journal conducted by Keshab Chandra Sen of the Brahma Samaj. There he read about Sri Ramakrishna for the first time. It appealed to him so much that he at once made up his mind to visit the saint of Dakshineswar. In this resolve of his, Ramachandra was encouraged and joined by his cousin Manamohan Mitra. Accordingly one afternoon in 1879, they both arrived at Dakshineswar. Finding the door of Sri Ramakrishna's room shut, they knocked. It was opened by a simple-looking man in plain dress, who, contrary to their expectations, did not look like an ochre-robed or ash-smear'd Sadhu, with tiger's skin and Kamandalu. But a few seconds in his presence convinced them that he was none other than Sri Ramakrishna himself for whom they had come.

From the very first meeting, the Master treated Ramachandra as his own. Sri Ramakrishna made intimate enquiries about his personal life and his inner mental conflicts. Ramachandra felt great joy in his heart, and spent that whole afternoon with the Master in spiritual discourse. When he

made pranams to Sri Ramakrishna before taking leave of him, the Master gave Ramachandra some Prasada and affectionately asked him to come again. The kindness and cordiality with which Sri Ramakrishna received Ramachandra on this first occasion charmed him. The Master's love and sympathy seemed so deep and so genuine that he had not experienced the like of it before.

This first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna transformed Ramachandra for ever. As the darkness of ages disappears the moment light enters, so Ramachandra's atheism vanished at once as a result of his contact with Sri Ramakrishna. The complete transformation in Ramachandra's attitude of mind was gradually effected in the course of his further contacts with Sri Ramakrishna. As he began to visit the Master more often, his life took a different turn and he felt a growing disgust for the so-called pleasures of the world. He and his cousin Manamohan tried to detach themselves from worldly thoughts, and talked earnestly about God. Sri Ramakrishna, and Dakshineswar most of the time.

One day Ramachandra frankly asked the Master if God really existed. Sri Ramakrishna emphatically assured him that 'God really exists', and said: 'You don't see any stars in the day but that does not mean that the stars do not exist. There is butter in the milk. But can anybody know it merely by sight? To have the butter you must churn the milk in a cool place. If you wish to catch fish in a pond, you have to learn the art of fishing from those who know it, and then sit patiently with a fishing rod, with the line thrown in, for a time. Similarly you can't realize God by a mere wish. You must go through certain mental disciplines. If you wish to see God, you have to learn the proper methods from those who have seen and known Him, and then proceed as directed by them.'

Ramachandra was unable to take these

words literally and was, however, thinking how *faith* in God would be aroused in him. The Master read his thoughts in an instant and said, 'God is certainly realizable. Look at the objects of His creation—they are all so beautiful and tangible. He whose creation is such cannot be non-existent or be an object of mere speculation.'

'Yes,' replied Ramachandra, 'but can I realize Him in this very life?'

After a pause, Sri Ramakrishna said, 'You get what you desire. It all depends on one's own earnestness. Faith alone is the key-note to success.' After singing a song beginning with 'The more you think of Him, the more your feelings will be roused', the Master added, 'The more you advance in one direction, the more distant will the opposite direction be from you. If you advance towards the east by ten steps, you shall leave behind the west by as many.'

'But one must have tangible proof. Unless we have a direct experience of God-realization, how can our weak and unbelieving minds have faith in His existence?' rejoined Ramachandra.

The Master replied with a smile, 'A typhoid patient in a delirious state clamours to take gallons of water and heaps of rice. But the physician pays no heed to these entreaties, nor does he prescribe medicines at the patient's dictation. He knows what he is doing.'

But Ramachandra seemed to find no consolation in these words. However, his attraction for the Master grew stronger day by day. Sri Ramakrishna asked him to read *Chaitanya Charitāmrita*, the classical work in Bengali on the life of Sri Chaitanya. The more Ramachandra read this sacred book, the more he understood Sri Ramakrishna's godly life, and the more his devotion to God increased. By and by he came to be convinced that Sri Ramakrishna was 'God incarnate' and began to proclaim his views publicly.

The elevating contact of the Master kept

Ramachandra cheerful and contented, no doubt; but his restlessness for God-realization grew strong and he became very eager to have spiritual experiences. One night he had a strange dream. He saw Sri Ramakrishna, who asked him to bathe in a familiar pond, and when he had done that, initiated him with a sacred Mantra, which he bade him repeat a certain number of times every day. When Ramachandra awoke, his whole being was thrilled with a blissful sensation. He could not contain himself—his joy knew no bounds. Next morning he hurried to Dakshineswar and related the dream-incident to the Master. Sri Ramakrishna congratulated him on his good luck and quietly said, 'He who receives divine blessings in a dream is sure to attain liberation'.

But after a time, Ramachandra made light of this dream initiation, considering it a mere fanciful vision, and once again became restless and unhappy as before. He was, as it were, between two stools—he found no pleasure in worldly enjoyments; on the other hand, his sceptical mind doubted the existence of God as ever before. A few days passed in this way. Then, one morning, when Ramachandra and a friend of his were standing in a public place, talking privately to each other about their mental conflicts and perplexities, suddenly a stranger approached them, and addressing Ramachandra said, 'Why are you so anxious? Have patience.' Ramachandra was taken aback to find that an utter stranger, coming from nowhere, should have read his personal thoughts and bid him be of good cheer! Before he could get over his surprise and talk to the stranger, the latter was gone; he had disappeared as suddenly as he had appeared. Ramachandra was puzzled, but felt this was not a mere illusion but a direct message from God. Later, he related this to Sri Ramakrishna who gently remarked, 'Yes, and many more things of this sort you shall see'. For some time after this incident Ramachandra felt great tranquillity of mind.

As Ramachandra began to taste the bliss which is the outcome of devotion, worldly pleasures appeared to him insipid. Once he wanted to renounce the world and even prayed to the Master to be initiated into Sanyasa. Sri Ramakrishna dissuaded him, saying, 'Nothing should be done on the spur of the moment. God alone knows what He means to do through a particular person. Where will your wife and children be if you leave the world? You must not try to upset the arrangement God has made for you. Everything will come in time.' This homely advice satisfied Ramachandra for the time

being. But later he once more broached the subject, and Sri Ramakrishna sternly said, 'What will you gain by renouncing the world? The family life is like a fort. It is easier to fight the enemy from within the fort than from outside. You will be in a position to renounce the world when you can bestow three-fourths of your mind on God, but not before that.' This finally quietened Ramachandra's hankering for Sanyasa and he resolved to live in the world as an ideal householder devotee of God.

(To be continued)

HARISHARANASH TAKA-STOTRA

BY K. R. PISHAROTI

Harisharanāṣṭaka is a noble hymn of praise, addressed to Vishnu. The Bhakta, personalized in this hymn as earnestly praying to the Lord, apprehends the unity of godhead, despite the apparent diversity of names and conceptions. Symbols may be different, but the thing symbolized is the same. Experience has taught him that human aids, whatever their source and whatever their nature, are inadequate, inasmuch as they are undependable and unreal and always fail to relieve human misery. Having lived his life in terms of a materialistic and sensate ideal, he feels ultimately that his has been a failure, for wicked tendencies still rule his heart, diseases control his body, and many are the sins to his credit. He is overcome by the feeling that he has failed to live up to the standards that his religion demands of him. His has been a life of delusion and he feels that he has nothing to live for and nothing to live upon. Naturally therefore he resigns himself wholly and completely to the feet of the Lord to save himself from the ills of life here and hereafter.

the world who lives like every one of us, struggles on through life, ever hoping for the best and ever doomed to disappointment. He has had some successes in life no doubt, just enough to sustain his hopes, but not enough to satisfy the cravings of his soul. Those on whom he pinned his faith, the sources of strength on which he relied, the ideals he wished to realize—all these turned out to be mere dreams, mere illusions. He feels he has failed, he has lived in vain, disappointment and frustration being the only fruits of his life's endeavours. Life, if it should not be a failure, must be based, he now realizes, on values higher than what a sensate cult lays down, that is, on spiritual values. And so, at long last, he turns his eyes to God and supplicates His grace and mercy.

Such is this sweet hymn of self-surrender from an eminently popular point of view—a hymn which many of us may need for help and guidance in our lives. Life must have a purpose and must be based on spiritual values, if it is to be one of achievement. Life is not an accident, and successful living,

Here we have the picture of a man of

even on a purely material plane, is by no means an accident. Death is not the end of life and cannot be. Had it been so, man will be marked by a cessation of all activities and it matters little whether he dies today or a hundred years hence. It is, therefore, an important question to ask—why should I live? Materialistic achievements can give us no satisfaction, for all past achievements are thrown into shade by the present achievements, and as sure as this is the case, so shall the future throw into shade all the achievements of the present.

Thus it will be seen that our achievements are every day being put behind by later-day achievements. This is true not merely of engines of destruction; it is equally true of those achievements which aim at the maximization of human happiness. Hence we have necessarily to admit that material achievements are not the summum bonum of life. They can satisfy only one phase, and that a very temporary phase, of human life. Life must have as its aim something other than these materialistic things. What can this be, unless it is spiritual perfection? That, therefore, deserves to be the ideal of life. And if this aim and purpose have to be achieved, then we have to turn our eyes from the world of nature or matter to the world of spirit. We have to lead a life of spirituality and for this we have to realize ourselves. The easiest way to do this is to begin with Sagunopāsana. We have to choose any of the forms of the Lord which appeals to our innate sense, tendencies, and capacities, and dedicate our lives to His will and guidance, surrendering ourselves at His feet. This is the great lesson that this hymn teaches us all who are struggling in the ocean of existence.

UNITY OF GODHEAD DESPITE DIVERSITY OF NAMES

हरिशरणाष्टक ।

ध्येयं वदन्ति शिवमेव हि केचिदन्ये
शक्तिं गणेशमपरे तु दिवाकरं वै ।

रूपैस्तु तेरपि विभासि यतस्त्वमेव
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणां मम दीनबन्धो ॥१॥

1. Some say Shiva alone is to be contemplated upon; others say Shakti, still others, Ganesha, or the Sun. But who shines in these forms art Thyself.¹ Therefore, O Friend of the lowly² Thou alone art my refuge.

[¹ Here is stressed the unity of godhead. This is an important piece of preliminary knowledge for all truly religious knowledge. Vishnu has a thousand names and each one of them emphasizes a certain aspect, attribute, or function. Nevertheless, they all refer to the same entity. Similar is the conception of every god known to us. All these gods bespeak merely functional or attributive differences of the same supreme Godhead. The Bhakta assumes that Vishnu is the fundamental godhead and so surrenders himself at His feet.

² *Dīna* means *duhkhita*, one who grovels in misery, one who evokes commiseration and sympathy and who, therefore, stands in immediate need of help. God is the saviour of the hapless wretch, and as such he surrenders himself at His feet.]

HUMAN AID NO AID AT ALL

नो सोदरो न जनको जननी न जाया
नैवात्मजो न च कुलं विपुलं बलं वा ।
संहरयते न किल कोऽपि सहायको मे
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणां मम दीनबन्धो ॥२॥

2. Not brother, not father, not mother, not wife, not son³, not family,⁴ not strength,⁵—none, indeed, is found a help at all for me.⁶ Therefore, O Friend of the wretched, Thou alone art my refuge.

[³ The reference is to those who are closely related by family bonds.

⁴ The term *kula* refers to family lineage, here rendered by the term 'family', as understood in such expressions as family honour, family tradition, family greatness, etc.

⁵ *Bala* means strength—the strength

arising from body or mind or both as well as strength arising from wealth, attendants, friends, power, etc.

⁶ This certainly is not a vague statement, but is profoundly true and is within the personal experience of many who have had

to struggle through life. This great truth we know through bitter personal experience and still we refuse to realize it: can anything be more foolish? Still that is the character of the majority of human beings.]

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

On the 14th of June last, at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, India's Ambassador to the U.S.A., unveiled a new statue of Swami Vivekananda, executed by Miss Malvina Hoffman who had known the great Swami personally. A fuller report of this happy and memorable function appears under the 'News and Reports' section in this issue. We present to our readers the illuminating talk of Mrs. Pandit on the occasion, in which she paid a moving tribute to the character of *Swami Vivekananda* and stressed the importance of the Swami's work in bringing about a closer cultural contact between India and America. . . .

The Avatara as History-Maker is the fourth of the series of radio talks delivered by Swami Ranganathananda, which are being published (serially) in these columns. It was broadcast on the 3rd March 1950, and is reproduced here by kind courtesy of the All India Radio (External Services Division). . . .

Swami Nityabodhananda's thought-provoking contribution comes at the right moment when the distraught world is badly in need of the *Vedantic Approach to the Problems of Civilization*. . . .

The conception of the form of Nataraja, the eternal manifestation of dancing, whose classic pose has inspired many a sculptor and artiste, is uniquely sublime in that it represents symbolically the five primordial

functions of the Godhead, viz. creation, preservation, destruction, propitiousness, and grace. The gracefulness and ecstatic energy of Shiva's 'Tāndava-Nritya', in the four quarters of Kailāsa, are vividly described in the *Shiva-Rahasya. The Divine Dance of Nataraja*, exquisitely rendered into English from the original Sanskrit by Sri P. Sama Rao, is sure to prove a great treat to the aesthete as well as the common reader. The text is quoted only at places where it is exceptionally meaningful. The remaining instalments will appear in the next two issues. . . .

Sri K. R. Pisharoti, whose rendering of the 'Māyāpanchaka' appeared in our last April issue, now offers to our readers his translation of the well-known hymn of pious self-surrender to God—*Harisharanāshataka-Stotra*. It will be concluded in the next instalment.

ONE RELIGION FOR THE WORLD ?

Swami Vivekananda has pointed out in his lectures on the Ideal of a Universal Religion, that a religion which accommodates every type of human mind, from the highest to the lowest, by giving nourishment to all, and by broadening its principles so as to exclude all tendencies towards dogmatism and fanatical proselytism, can only lay claim to universal acceptance. Such a religion should base itself on universal and impersonal truths and yet have infinite scope for the play of great personalities of the past

and many more to come in future, all of them exemplifying those impersonal principles. A single person and his teachings alone, however great, can never satisfy the *whole* of humanity. The seers and mystics of ancient India, though they stressed the unitary experience of the spiritual ideal of a universal religion of man, took care not to force all men into one Procrustean religious bed. In fact they have warned the world against a too narrow and illogical idea of a single religion which can only breed intolerance and fanaticism. The world has more than one great religion. It is good and is as it should be. But it should at the same time be clearly understood that at the core, in their essential aspect, all these religions are the same, not contradictory but supplementary. It is not by the depletion or destruction of other religions that a single universal religion can become great but by the inclusion and assimilation of the ideals and aspirations of those religions into its own spiritual body.

It is, therefore, amusing that a learned person like Dr. B. R. Ambedkar should aver in his article on 'Buddha and the Future of His Religion', in the last Vaishakha Number of the *Maha-Bodhi* (April-May 1950), that 'Buddhism is the only religion which the world can have'. He writes: 'If the *new* world—which be it realized is very different from the old—must have a religion—and the *new* world needs religion far more than the old world did—then it can only be the religion of the Buddha.' It is deplorable that the learned Doctor should have openly expressed his personal predilections and prejudices by indulging in much unhelpful and uncharitable criticism of other world religions and their founders in general and Hinduism and Sri Krishna in particular. There is a lot of confused thinking visible in some of his statements in the said article. Competent authorities, both Eastern and Western, who have made a lifelong study of Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, have point-

ed out that Buddhism, as preached by the Buddha, is essentially Vedantic in character. Sri Krishnadas Buddhapriya, a learned scholar, well versed both in Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, writing in the *Vedanta Kesari* (June 1950), critically discusses the points raised by Dr. Ambedkar, in the form of a catechism under the title 'Is Buddhism the Only Religion the World Can Have?' In the course of the article, Buddhapriya ably and convincingly shows that Buddha came to revive the Vedantic tradition by purifying the Sanatana Dharma of all the dross that had accumulated on it. Buddha did not preach anything new except that he emphasized the moral, more than the philosophical, concept of religion. Buddha, who was love and kindness personified, and whom the Hindus devotedly worship as one in the galaxy of Avatars, coming after Sri Krishna, tried to liberalize and humanize society, and lead mankind to the state of supreme beatitude (*nirvāna* or *nihśreyasa*).

Repudiating the claim that 'Buddhism is the only religion which the world can have' and that 'Buddhism alone can save the Hindus', Buddhapriya writes:

'The age for one religion alone claiming a monopoly for all truths, with the necessary consequence of religious feuds and holy wars, can no more have any appeal to civilized mankind. So long as nature and temperament of man differ there is need for a variety of religions. The greater the number of religions the more the chance of a man getting it. ... So it is absurd to say that one particular religion will suit all. What we require is a comparative study of all the various religions and absorption of the best element found in other religions too, to one's own natural religion.

Those who take a pin-hole view of religion cannot see anything beyond what is revealed to them within their tiny ken. All the great religions of the world have been actively alive for many centuries and saving generations after generations in all parts of the world. It is preposterous to say, therefore, that Buddhism alone has the merit to be recognized as the world religion. As for Hinduism there is no need of accepting Buddhism as an alternative religion, for there is nothing in Buddhism worthy of taking over to Hinduism, which is not already there. The tremendous message of rooting out selfishness given by Lord Buddha has already found a place in the heart of the Hindus, who worship

him as God incarnate upon the earth. Buddha did not come to destroy. He was the logical development of the religion of the Hindus. The wonderful humanizing power of the Great Master must be accepted by the Hindus. This does not mean that they should exchange Hinduism for Buddhism; for assimilation does not mean the destruction of one's individuality. ... It is only the Vedic religion, which considers ways and means and lays down rules for the fourfold attainment of man, comprising of Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Moksha, that can serve the different tastes of all people in India, and not Buddhism with its one coat for all—killing all desires and getting Nirvāna.

'While Hinduism is a whole symphony, Buddhism is only a note in it. The philosophical background of Buddhism is too slender to hold its moral principles. So while the Hindus may wish to combine the heart of Buddha to the wonderful brain of Shankara, they have nothing to gain by disinherit Hinduism, which is deeply rooted in the nation, to the bottom of the entire society.'

Drawing the attention of the Bhikshu Sangha to the need of its revivifying, the great ideal of humanitarian service, Dr. Ambedkar writes: 'When the idea of service to suffering humanity comes to one's mind every one thinks of the Ramakrishna Mission. No one thinks of the Buddhist

Sangha. Who should regard service as its pious duty, the Sangha or the Mission? There can be no doubt about the answer.' Dr. Ambedkar does not expressly say what the 'answer' is, at least according to him. We, along with the public, are naturally unable to know what exactly he has in mind when making such a comparison (or contrast?). However, why should there be any ambiguous distinction as to who should regard service to fellowmen as an ideal or duty? Rendering service to suffering humanity is no exclusive monopoly of any individual or group. India and the world today are in great need of a large number of sincere and selfless workers, and the more the better for all concerned. In India, from very early times, long before the advent of Buddha, self-sacrifice and service to fellow beings (including even animals) were enjoined as great religious duties (*pañca mahā-yajñāh*) on every individual, as a means to realizing the highest end of life.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

NEW FRONTIERS OF PSYCHOLOGY. BY NICHOLAS DEVORE. Published by The Philosophical Library, New York 16., N.Y., U.S.A. Pages 137. Price \$ 3.00.

This excellent book is a bold approach to the dismantlement of the yet common view that physiology can explain everything including all phenomena of the psycho-mental sphere. The main thesis of the book is that of cosmic conditioning, an aspect that has hitherto been completely neglected. Here is a brave attempt to settle the body-mind controversy. Psycho-physical inter-activity, as averred by DeVore, is not of the kind of the Parallelists, nor of that of the Animists, nor of even the Psycho-Physical Monists; it is well a kind of its own, though the author is professedly inspired by McDougall.

Right at the outset the crass physiologists, and physical scientists' fist-on-the-table claim to supersede and outlaw all philosophical and kindred thinking and achievement, is done away with in a most pleasing

manner that must appeal to the unbiased, critical reader. 'The physical scientists, having pursued a rigorous but fruitless search for some organ or cavity in which the soul might reside in life and from which it might escape in death, have generally chalked it off as non-existent. While this elimination appeared to take a large weight off their minds, man in the aggregate seems unwilling thus to be summarily deprived of a soul, or of the conviction that he is or has one. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body". Mankind expects science to prove it.' (P. 10).

The author believes in a mental dualism; there is a body-mind which is to direct the individual towards vegetative functioning, and there is the spiritual mind that makes for subtler accomplishment, often struggling with the former; the dominance of the one or the other yields the greater or lesser character. The spiritual mind, in the opinion of DeVore, is conditioned through a relationship to gravitation, the physical mind to

radiation, by which it is constantly influenced. It would be very unwise indeed to dismiss this claim as borrowed from a kind of semi-scientific astrology, for the author is too sincere a worker for that, but the idea is new. Physio-psychologists may thunder against deVore's contention that the locus of reasoning or thinking is not in the brain, but without, i.e. behind the sphere of the skull! We cannot altogether dismiss this claim in view of the convincing and scientific data enunciated by ancient Indian philosophers of the Yoga school.

Surgery and symptomatic diagnosis have wrought too much havoc in sophisticated society and doubts against symptomatic treatment are natural and old. The author observes: '... I say now that cancer cannot occur in a healthy body in which there dwells a healthy mind—cosmic ray or no cosmic ray. However, complexes of cosmic origin can be of a nature that will impart a predisposition toward malefic growths, and I agree with Dr. Kubie that the mental adaptation of the individual to his environment is today's most serious social problem'. (P. 27).

Casting a side-glance on matters of ethical import, deVore says: 'Morality is a system of teaching morons things they have not the intelligence to comprehend when stated in terms of cause and effect. No man who has a perfect comprehension of the law of cause and effect, and the ability to see in advance how it will operate in a given case—needs morals.' (P. 44).

DeVore then goes on to consider the main 'urges', to establish the purposiveness of that (spiritual) individuality and its associated (bodily) personality. In rejecting therein Freud's extravagances, he proves to be well inclined to accept Jung's excellent approach, and, mentioning in this summary of urges the corresponding physical types, he somewhat conforms to Kretschmer and the Viennese School. These basic power-urges, viz. curiosity, pleasure, aggressiveness, equability, possessiveness, individualism, impressionability and architectoniccollectivist, represent, according to him, the capacity for emotional stimulation. Progressive thinkers cannot but agree with the author when he holds that Jung's typological terminations of 'extrovert' and 'introvert' do not cover all the capacities of an individual, but refer to either intellect or sensation, feeling or intuition within that individual. Much debate has arisen from the fact that many psychologists want to apply extroversion and introversion respectively, to a whole person.

A short but most interesting chapter is the one on 'Probing the Subconscious'. Freud and his paraphernalia are treated in a very humorous and readable manner, and the unscientific, ergo not harmless, portion in that scion's doctrine is charmingly refuted. In the subsequent chapter on 'Man's Dynamic Needs', the author takes leave from scientific fields to promulgate a

very sound, because practical, psychology, summed up as follows, in his own words: '... a philosophy of work that pictures it as play as well as a method of progress toward a goal, will enable you to romp through life with the spirit of eternal youth coursing through your veins to the last gasp'. (P. 90).

The last chapters are interesting and instructive for gaining an aspect of the happy life; yet, in them we miss the spiritually psychological and philosophical thread that leads the reader to them. DeVore briefly mentions how badly the doctrine of Karma is misinterpreted in the West, where it serves as a subterfuge, an expedient to conceal the weaknesses of the one who uses it freely and wistfully. In support of his own conclusion he mentions what Buddha has taught, and calls upon psychologists to unite in an effort to 'release some of the power potentials that repose in the human soul'. The last chapter 'Can Psychology save Civilization?' is a strikingly novel restatement of the conception of the 'new frontiers' of a sound psychology, which lead men to a better way of life and enable nations to successfully withstand the challenge of an intolerable environment.

There is nothing in these pages that is unfamiliar to students of Indian psychology. Hindu and Buddhistic systems of study of the human mind and spirit touch deeper levels and extend over vaster frontiers than what is known to have been achieved in the West. However, we gladly welcome this thought-provoking volume which is bound to command the attention of every man and woman. The author's commendable originality in this field is likely to flutter the doves hitherto dominated by the behaviouristic schools.

R.

THE STORY OF A DEDICATED LIFE. (LIFE OF SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA). Pp. 231. Price Rs. 3.

FOR THINKERS ON EDUCATION. BY SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA. Pp. 234. Price Rs. 3.

Both Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4.

The general public know much about Sri Ramakrishna and his great disciple Swami Vivekananda. But not much is known about the other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, each one of whom received and expressed predominantly, in his life, a certain facet of the Master's great spiritual personality. Though less known, these disciples of the Master were spiritual giants and pioneers of silent constructive work. It is their great influence that has transformed and ennobled the life of hundreds of persons, far and wide. Their contribution to the building up of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission organization need hardly be emphasized.

Swami Ramakrishnananda, one of these great direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, whose biography forms the subject-matter of the first book under review, may

be said to be the father of the Ramakrishna Movement in South India. Swami Ramakrishnananda's magnetic spiritual personality was the nucleus round which many persons and things gathered and were shaped into brilliant form. In the early years, after the passing away of the Master, when the young band of disciples had formed themselves into a monastic fraternity, and many of whom wandered forth as Parivrajakas, or stayed in distant places of pilgrimage, performing austerities, Shashi Maharaj (the name by which Swami Ramakrishnananda was familiarly known) resolutely stuck on to the humble monastery, often as its sole inmate, engaging himself steadily and devotedly in the ecstatic worship of the Master's sacred relics. He was, as it were, the mother of the monastery, looking after the well-being of his brother-disciples. Later on, as the head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, which he founded in 1897 at the instance of Swami Vivekananda, in order to spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna in South India, his life was a perfect example of devout self-surrender at the feet of the Master and dedicated service to others whom he looked upon as the Master's children. This book, aptly entitled *The Story of a Dedicated Life*, fills a great need by giving the general readers, for the first time, a full and authentic account of the inspiring life of Swami Ramakrishnananda, whom Swami Vivekananda called 'the main pillar of our Math'.

Swami Ramakrishnananda, who was a rich combination of a saint, a thinker, and a scholar, besides being a source of spiritual inspiration to the people, was the author of valuable works in English and Bengali. He also wrote several essays and articles, and delivered discourses and lectures during his stay in Madras between the years 1897 and 1911. Twenty-two of these lectures and essays, delivered and written by the Swami at different times, bearing on the essential aspects of *education*, have been collected under suitable groupings in the second book under review, *For Thinkers on Education*. Swami Ramakrishnananda who was a deep scholar and a model teacher, secular as well as spiritual, with keen psychological insight, has discussed, in his inimitable manner, the ideals and aspirations that should animate educational principles. Those who are concerned with the future educational set up of the country and those who are entrusted with the task of educating our youth and evolving a sound system of the right type of national education for India will find much light and guidance in this book. Giving in a nutshell the essential nature of all education, the Swami writes: 'Religion is self-culture, and self-culture is true education. Hence genuine education is indissolubly connected with religion'. The leaders and educationists of the country, who are all agreed that there must be a change for the better in our system of education obtaining today, can find in these superb writings of Swami Ramakrishnananda, much thought-provoking

material helpful in the task of the reorientation of educational principles in accordance with India's cultural traditions.

A short Sanskrit article by Swami Ramakrishnananda, reproduced at the end of the book, reveals the simple style in which profound thoughts have been expressed by the Swami in that divine language.

RAMANAMA. BY 'M. K. GANDHI. *Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, Pages 56. Price Re. 1/-*

Gandhiji is one of those who sought to counteract the effects of the material civilization of the West by attempting to take man nearer to his real spiritual nature. He found that the remedy for this extrovert civilization, which makes man a slave of the senses, lay in taking one's stand on the spiritual nature of man, giving up dependence, as far as possible, on things external—which would make him master of himself. So, Gandhiji emphasized simplicity of living in conformity with moral and natural laws. In the repetition of Ramanama, i.e. the name of God, he found a simple but effective means, tested by many sages for ages, for the spiritual regeneration of man. In this collection of Gandhiji's writings and speeches we find an exposition of what Ramanama is, and how it can be a spiritual force and a panacea for all the ills of mankind, including physical illness. Though Gandhiji has emphasized the efficacy of Ramanama for physical good, his real idea was to take man through the physical to the spiritual. This is evident from the following: 'What I do not understand about Christian Scientists is that they make altogether too much of physical health and disease.' (P. 24—to Lord Lothian). 'But a man of God will not worry if a limb is lost. Recitation of Ramanama is neither an empirical method nor a makeshift.' (P. 35). Otherwise it would be prostituting a means of higher life to lower ends.

BENGALI

GRAHA-RATNA VIJNAN VA RATNA PARIKSHA. BY RAJENDRANATH SHASTRI. *Published by Bharat Sahitya Bhavan, 203/2, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Pages 166. Price Rs. 4.*

LAGHU-PARASHARI-RAHASYA. BY RAJENDRANATH SHASTRI. *Published by Satyavrata Library, 197, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Pages 146. Price Rs. 4.*

Pandit Rajendranath Shastri, the learned author of these two books on astrology, is a professor in the All India School of Astrology, Calcutta, and an author of several books on astrology. It is said that planets (*graha*) that may cast an evil influence, may be propitiated to turn favourable if appropriate jewels or precious stones (*ratna*), prescribed by Hindu astrology, are presented to Brahmins or worn by the persons concerned. The first book contains authoritative information on

the science of such jewels and gems that are considered dear to the nine planets. According to this science, Mānikya is dear to Sun, pearl to Moon, Pravāla to Mars, Marakata to Mercury, Pushparāga to Jupiter, diamond to Venus, Nila to Saturn, Gomeda to Rāhu, and Vaidya to Ketu. These nine jewels (*nava-ratna*) are different kinds of precious crystals and possess various colours and qualities. The distinctive marks of and rules for wearing these jewels from the astrological point of view are detailed in this book with scholarly lucidity.

Pārāshari-Hora is an important work on astrology, which is one of the six Vedangas. On the basis of this great work, Pandit Bhairava Dutta Pande of Vrindaban has written a small book named *Laghu-Pārāshari*. In the book under review, the work of Pandit Bhairava Dutta is critically analysed, and the principles of true astrology, according to Pārāshara, are enumerated. With profuse quotations from the Vedas and other authentic scriptures, the learned author, Pandit Rajendranath Shastri, has clearly discussed how the length of life and the prospects of wealth and fortune may be calculated and forecast from the position of planets or the signs of the zodiac.

Both the books, though mainly specialized subjects, are meant to be popular handbooks on astrology for the general reader.

S.J.

SATYA DARSHAN. BY KALIKANANDA SWAMI. *Published by Sri Gopalchandra Vedantashastri, Saraswati Pustakalaya, 105 Sadananda Bazar, Banaras. Pages 666. Price Rs. 5.*

This is an introduction to the Hindu (and particular-

ly Vedantic) way of life in a dialogue form. The author's approach to the subject is simple yet profound. He illustrates his points by many a parable and quotation from various religious books.

The book will have many admirers. The learned author of this substantial volume has certainly earned the gratitude of the Bengali-reading public by his commendable effort.

P. J. CHAUDHURY

VIVEKANANDA INSTITUTION PATRIKA. *The Vivekananda Institution, 107 Khurut Road, Howrah. Pages 65.*

The Vivekananda Institution (High School) has brought out the twenty-third (1356 B.S.) number of its annual magazine, as usual in an elegant manner. Most of the articles, mainly of literary and cultural interest, are contributed by the young students of the School from the seventh to the tenth standards. The articles are readable and speak highly of the meritorious accomplishments of the students of the Institution.

GUJARATI

SATYAGRAHA SAMVATSARI MOHARRAM. BY HABIB U. GAGNANI. *Published by the Author, Rya Gate, Rajkot, Saurashtra, for free distribution. Pages 32.*

This booklet gives a short account of Moharram—the historic event in the early career of Islam. It will help Gujarati-knowing readers to understand the significance of the annual ceremony observed with great enthusiasm throughout the Muslim world. According to the author the event is one of the admirable struggles for democracy in the history of mankind. The author is a liberal-minded Muslim and his catholic outlook is reflected in the manner of his dealing with the subject.

NEWS AND REPORTS

UNVEILING OF A STATUE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA CENTRE, NEW YORK

On the 14th June 1950, at a special impressive ceremony held at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, a life-sized bronze portrait statue of Swami Vivekananda was unveiled by Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Ambassador of India to the United States, before a large and distinguished gathering, including several persons who had known the great Swami in their youth. The portrait statue was executed and offered as a gift to the Centre by the celebrated American sculptor Miss Malvina Hoffman, who had the good fortune to know Swami Vivekananda personally. Miss Hoffman, who

had met Swami Vivekananda when he was in America over fifty years ago and had deeply felt the power of his personality, has done this noble work of art—a magnificent conception representing the Swami in meditation—out of her genuine love and appreciation for what the Swami stands for. The lifelike quality and exquisite workmanship of the portrait statue in bronze bear ample testimony to the fact that the renowned sculptor has been able to express to a remarkable degree both the strength and the serenity of character of Swami Vivekananda. Referring to the statue—a masterly execution of interpretative art of deep spiritual quality,—the *New York Herald Tribune* wrote : 'In her waistlength study of the famous monk who died in 1902, Miss Hoffman

has been able with singular effectiveness to project the dual nature of the leader, who was at once the ascetic and the man of action'.

The same morning, at a private service in the chapel of the Centre, the statue was duly dedicated with formal Puja. In the evening when the unveiling of the statue and the memorable function in that connection took place, Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Centre, gave the introductory address. After unveiling the statue, Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, in the course of her illuminating address, paid a moving tribute to Swami Vivekananda and spoke highly of the important significance of the Swami's message both to India and America. (A résumé of this address is printed elsewhere in this issue.) Some of the other distinguished speakers on the occasion were; Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Goldenson, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Emanu-el, New York; Dr. Filmer S. C. Northrop, Professor of Law and Philosophy at Yale University; and Rev. Dr. Wendell Phillips, Rector of Christ's Church, Rye, New York and a minister of the Protestant Episcopal denomination. It is of particular interest that the covering placed over the statue for the unveiling was a robe worn by Swami Vivekananda while in America. Of the messages of felicitation received by the Centre for the occasion, there was one from Srimat Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and another from Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, VRINDABAN

REPORT FOR 1949

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Vrindaban has completed the forty-third year of its useful career at the end of 1949. The following is a brief report of its activities during the year 1949.

Indoor Hospital: The total number of cases (including eye cases) treated during the year was 1,355. The total number of surgical cases was 1,905.

Nanda Baba Eye Hospital: The total of Indoor admissions was 714 and the out-patients treated numbered 19,256. 4,044 major and minor operations (including injection-therapy) were performed.

Outdoor Dispensary: The new cases treated during the year were 31,083 and the repeated cases were 67,216. The number of surgical cases including those of the Eye Department was 1,414. The figures are higher than the corresponding figures for previous years.

X-Ray Department: The number of cases examined was 230 as against 74 cases examined in 1948.

Clinical Laboratory and Inductothermy: 747 samples of blood, urine, stool, and sputum were examined during the year. 21 cases were treated by Inductotherm-therapy.

Refugee Relief: 18 refugee patients were treated in the Indoor Hospital and 15,875 refugees were treated in the Outdoor Dispensary.

Financial Position: The total receipts for the year, under the General Fund, amounted to Rs. 56,828-2-6 and the total expenditure was Rs. 56,122-2-9 leaving a small surplus of Rs. 705-15-9. At the beginning of every year the Sevashrama has to take a loan of Rs. 10,000 to enable it to proceed with the transactions under the General Fund. It is therefore essential that the Fund should close with a minimum balance of Rs. 10,000. As such more contributions for the General Fund from the generous public are needed.

Immediate Needs: (1) The Shifting of the Sevashrama. The Sevashrama being situated just on the bank of the Jamuna is threatened every year with floods. In 1947 the whole of the Sevashrama remained under water for about four days and all hospital activities had to be suspended for a period. Moreover, the present site of the Sevashrama is in an out-of-the-way locality. Because of its remoteness patients cannot avail themselves of its services easily and that to the desired extent. To obviate these difficulties, it has been decided to shift the Sevashrama to a more prominent and safe site near the Mathura-Vrindaban main road. This shifting of the Sevashrama and the new construction of the hospital buildings, doctors' and nurses' quarters, monastery, shrine, etc., will necessitate very heavy expenditure and the Management appeal to the generous public kindly to contribute liberally for this purpose so that the Sevashrama may soon be shifted to its proposed site.

(2) Permanent Fund: The annual expenditure of the Sevashrama amounts to about Rs. 40,000 out of which it gets about Rs. 20,000 by way of grants, subscriptions etc. To raise the balance of Rs. 20,000 is a hard problem which the Management of the Sevashrama have to tackle every year. It is, therefore, essential that the Permanent Fund of the Sevashrama should be considerably strengthened so that its finances may be stabilized to a reasonable extent. Persons desirous of endowing beds in memory of their friends and relations may do so by kindly contributing Rs. 5,000 per bed.

Contributions either in cash or in kind, however small, may kindly be sent to: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Vrindaban, Dt. Mathura, U. P.